



Europäisches Patentamt

(19)

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets



(11) Publication number: 0 683 406 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(21) Application number: 95303358.6

(51) Int. Cl.⁶: G02B 5/20, G02F 1/1335

(22) Date of filing: 19.05.95

- (30) Priority: 20.05.94 JP 106824/94
02.05.95 JP 108535/95
16.05.95 JP 116767/95
- (43) Date of publication of application:
22.11.95 Bulletin 95/47
- (84) Designated Contracting States:
CH DE ES FR GB IT LI NL
- (71) Applicant: CANON KABUSHIKI KAISHA
30-2, 3-chome, Shimomaruko,
Ohta-ku
Tokyo (JP)
- (72) Inventor: Kashiwazaki, Akio, c/o Canon K.K.
30-2, 3-chome,
Shimomaruko
Ohta-ku, Tokyo (JP)

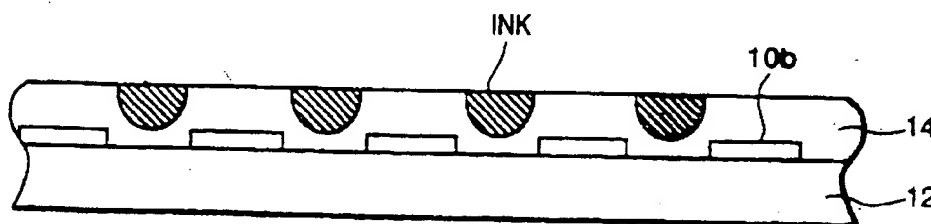
Inventor: Sato, Hiroshi, c/o Canon K.K.
30-2, 3-chome,
Shimomaruko
Ohta-ku, Tokyo (JP)
Inventor: Shiota, Katsuhiko, c/o Canon K.K.
30-2, 3-chome,
Shimomaruko
Ohta-ku, Tokyo (JP)
Inventor: Yokoi, Hideto, c/o Canon K.K.
30-2, 3-chome,
Shimomaruko
Ohta-ku, Tokyo (JP)
Inventor: Miyazaki, Takeshi, c/o Canon K.K.
30-2, 3-chome,
Shimomaruko
Ohta-ku, Tokyo (JP)
Inventor: Shiba, Shoji, c/o Canon K.K.
30-2, 3-chome,
Shimomaruko
Ohta-ku, Tokyo (JP)

- (74) Representative: Beresford, Keith Denis Lewis
et al
BERESFORD & Co.
2-5 Warwick Court
High Holborn
London WC1R 5DJ (GB)

(54) Color filter, manufacturing method, and liquid crystal display.

- (57) It is an object of the present invention to provide a color filter manufacturing method which can manufacture a low-cost color filter without causing any ink blurring, any color mixing, and any color omission. In order to achieve the object, according to the present invention, there is provided a color filter manufacturing method for a color filter (10) formed by forming a layer (14) to be colored on a transparent substrate (12), and discharging an ink colored in a predetermined color for coloring the layer, wherein when the thickness of the layer to be colored is assumed to be d (μm) and the volume of the ink discharged at one discharge is to be V_0 (pl: pico-liter), the thickness of the layer to be colored and the volume of the ink are adjusted to establish $d > V_0/500$.

FIG. 8



EP 0 683 406 A1

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method of manufacturing a color filter by forming and arranging a plurality of colored filter elements on a transparent substrate, the color filter, a liquid crystal display apparatus, and an apparatus having the liquid crystal display apparatus.

With recent advances in personal computers, especially portable personal computers, the demand tends to arise for liquid crystal displays, especially color liquid crystal displays. However, in order to further popularize the use of liquid crystal displays, a reduction in cost must be achieved. Especially, it is required to reduce the cost of a color filter which occupies a large proportion of the total cost. Various methods have been tried to satisfy the required characteristics of color filters while meeting the above requirements. However, any method capable of satisfying all the requirements has not been established. The respective methods will be described below. The first method is a coloring method, which is the most popular method. In the coloring method, a water-soluble polymer material as a colorable material is coated on a glass substrate, and the coating is patterned into a desired shape by a photolithography process. The obtained pattern is dipped in a color bath to obtain a colored pattern. This process is repeated three times to form R, G, and B color filter layers.

The second method is a pigment dispersion method, which is currently replacing the coloring method. In this method, a pigment-dispersed photosensitive resin layer is formed on a substrate and patterned into a single-color pattern. This process is repeated three times to obtain R, G, and B color filter layers.

The third method is an electrodeposition method. In this method, a transparent electrode is patterned on a substrate, and the resultant structure is dipped in an electrodeposition coating fluid containing a pigment, a resin, an electrolyte, and the like to be colored in the first color by electrodeposition. This process is repeated three times to form R, G, and B color filter layers. Finally, these layers are calcined.

The fourth method is a method of dispersing a pigment in a thermosetting resin, performing a print operation three times to form R, G, and B coatings separately, and thermosetting the resins, thereby forming colored layers. In either of the above methods, a protective layer is generally formed on the colored layers.

The point common to these methods is that the same process must be repeated three times to obtain layers colored in three colors, i.e., R, G, and B. This causes an increase in cost. In addition, as the number of processes increases, the yield decreases. In the electrodeposition method, limitations are imposed on pattern shapes which can be formed. For this reason,

with the existing techniques, this method cannot be applied to TFTs. In the print method, a pattern with a fine pitch cannot be formed because of poor resolution and poor evenness.

In order to eliminate these drawbacks, methods of manufacturing color filters by an ink-jet system are disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open Nos. 59-75205, 63-235901, 1-217320, and 4-123005.

The above manufacturing methods by the conventional ink-jet system cannot manufacture a satisfactory color filter in view of ink blurring, color mixing between adjacent filter elements, white omissions, and the like.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention has been made in consideration of the above situation, and has as its object to provide a color filter manufacturing method which can manufacture a low-cost color filter without causing any ink blurring, any color mixing, and any color omission.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a color filter manufactured by the above manufacturing method, a liquid crystal display apparatus, and an apparatus having this liquid crystal display apparatus.

In order to solve the above problems and achieve the above objects, a color filter manufacturing method of the present invention is characterized by the following arrangement.

That is, there is provided a manufacturing method for a color filter formed by forming a layer to be colored on a transparent substrate, and discharging an ink colored in a predetermined color to the layer for coloring the layer, wherein when a thickness of the layer to be colored is assumed to be d (μm) and a volume of the ink discharged at one discharge is to be V_0 (pl: pico-liter), the thickness of the layer to be colored and the volume of the ink are adjusted to establish $d > V_0/500$.

A color filter of the present invention is characterized by the following arrangement.

That is, there is provided a color filter formed by forming a layer to be colored on a transparent substrate, and discharging an ink colored in a predetermined color to the layer for coloring the layer, wherein when a thickness of the layer to be colored is assumed to be d (μm) and a volume of the ink discharged at one discharge is to be V_0 (pl: pico-liter), the color filter is manufactured by adjusting the thickness of the layer to be colored and the volume of the ink so as to establish $d > V_0/500$.

A liquid crystal display apparatus of the present invention is characterized by the following arrangement.

That is, there is provided a liquid crystal display apparatus using a color filter formed by forming a lay-

er to be colored on a transparent substrate, and discharging an ink colored in a predetermined color to the layer for coloring the layer, comprising: a color filter manufactured by adjusting a thickness of the layer to be colored and a volume of the ink to establish $d > V_0/500$ when the thickness of the layer to be colored is assumed to be d (μm) and the volume of the ink discharged at one discharge is to be V_0 (pl: pico-liter); and a substrate opposing the color filter, wherein a liquid crystal compound is sealed between the substrates.

An apparatus having a liquid crystal display apparatus of the present invention is characterized by the following arrangement.

That is, there is provided an apparatus having a liquid crystal display apparatus using a color filter formed by forming a layer to be colored on a transparent substrate, and discharging an ink colored in a predetermined color to the layer for coloring the layer, comprising: a liquid crystal display apparatus having a color filter manufactured by adjusting a thickness of the layer to be colored and a volume of the ink to establish $d > V_0/500$ when the thickness of the layer to be colored is assumed to be d (μm) and the volume of the ink discharged at one discharge is to be V_0 (pl: pico-liter), and a substrate opposing the color filter, wherein a liquid crystal compound is sealed between the substrates; and image signal output means for outputting an image signal to the liquid crystal display apparatus.

Other objects and advantages besides those discussed above shall be apparent to those skilled in the art from the description of a preferred embodiment of the invention which follows. In the description, reference is made to accompanying drawings, which form a part thereof, and which illustrate an example of the invention. Such example, however, is not exhaustive of the various embodiments of the invention, and therefore reference is made to the claims which follow the description for determining the scope of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 1A and 1B are partial enlarged views showing color filters manufactured by a manufacturing method and apparatus according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a side sectional view showing the color filter in Fig. 1A or 1B;

Fig. 3 is a view showing the structure of an ink-jet head IJH for spraying an ink on a layer to be colored;

Fig. 4 is a timing chart for explaining a method of controlling the amount of ink discharged by changing power supplied to a heater;

Fig. 5 is a perspective view showing the arrangement of an apparatus for manufacturing the color

filter shown in Figs. 1A or 1B and 2;

Fig. 6 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of the color filter manufacturing apparatus;

Fig. 7 is a sectional view showing a method of manufacturing a liquid crystal color filter;

Fig. 8 is a sectional view showing the method of manufacturing the liquid crystal color filter;

Fig. 9 is a sectional view showing the method of manufacturing the liquid crystal color filter;

Fig. 10 is a side sectional view showing the structure of a color liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 11 is a side sectional view showing the structure of a color liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 12 is a block diagram showing an information processing apparatus using a liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 13 is a perspective view showing an information processing apparatus using a liquid crystal panel; and

Fig. 14 is a perspective view showing an information processing apparatus using a liquid crystal panel.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The preferred embodiment of the present invention will be described in detail below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Figs. 1A and 1B are partial enlarged views of color filters manufactured by a manufacturing method according to the present invention.

Each color filter 10 is mounted on the front surface of a color liquid crystal display or the like used for a portable personal computer or the like. As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, filter elements 10a colored in R (red), G (green), and B (blue) are two-dimensionally arranged in a matrix form. In the color filter shown in Fig. 1A, the filter elements 10a are arranged in a simple matrix form. In the color filter shown in Fig. 1B, the filter elements 10a are arranged in a staggered form. A black light-shielding grating 10b is formed between the respective filter elements 10a to make the boundaries between the filter elements 10a clear so as to provide a clear screen. Note that according to the embodiment, each filter element is formed in a rectangular shape having shorter sides of 50 to 100 μm and longer sides of 150 to 450 μm .

Fig. 2 is a side sectional view of the color filter 10 in Fig. 1A or 1B. The light-shielding grating 10b is formed on a glass substrate 12 constituting the main body of the color filter 10. The filter elements 10a of the respective colors are formed on the light-shielding grating 10b.

In manufacturing the color filter 10, chromium is deposited on the glass substrate 12 by sputtering, and the resultant film is formed into a matrix pattern by photolithography. This pattern is the light-

shielding grating 10b. A layer 14 to be colored is formed on the light-shielding grating 10b. The layer 14 consists of a cellulose, an acrylic resin, gelatin, or the like and absorbs a fluid. Droplets (to be referred to as an ink hereinafter) containing a coloring material (dye) are sprayed on the filter element formation regions of the layer 14 by a recording head of the ink-jet system. With this process, the layer 14 is colored to form the color filter elements 10a.

In general, a color liquid crystal panel is formed by joining the color filter substrate 12 to a counter substrate 54 and sealing a liquid crystal compound 52 therebetween. TFTs (Thin Film Transistors; not shown) and transparent pixel electrodes 53 are formed on the inner surface of one substrate 54 of the liquid crystal panel in a matrix form. The color filter 10 is placed on the inner surface of the other substrate 12 such that the R, G, and B coloring materials are positioned to oppose the pixel electrodes. A transparent counter electrode (common electrode) 50 is formed on the entire surface of the color filter 10. The light-shielding grating 10b is generally formed on the color filter substrate 12 side (see Fig. 10). However, in a BM (black matrix) on-array type liquid crystal panel, such a grating is formed on the TFT substrate side opposing the color filter substrate (see Fig. 11). Aligning films 51 are formed within the planes of the two substrates. By performing a rubbing process for the aligning films 51, the liquid crystal molecules can be aligned in a predetermined direction. Polarizing plates 55 are bonded to the outer surface of the respective glass substrates. The liquid crystal compound 52 is filled in the gap (about 2 to 5 μm) between these glass substrates. As a backlight, a combination of a fluorescent lamp (not shown) and a scattering plate (not shown) is generally used. A display operation is performed by causing the liquid crystal compound to serve as an optical shutter for changing the transmittance for light emitted from the backlight.

A case wherein the above liquid crystal panel is applied to an information processing apparatus will be described below with reference to Figs. 12 to 14.

Fig. 12 is a block diagram showing the schematic arrangement of an information processing apparatus serving as a wordprocessor, a personal computer, a facsimile apparatus, and a copying machine, to which the above liquid crystal panel is applied.

Referring to Fig. 12, reference numeral 1801 denotes a control unit for controlling the overall apparatus. The control unit 1801 includes a CPU such as a microprocessor and various I/O ports, and performs control by outputting/inputting control signals, data signals, and the like to/from the respective units. Reference numeral 1802 denotes a display unit for displaying various menus, document information, and image data read by an image reader 1807, and the like on the display screen; 1803, a transparent, pressure-sensitive touch panel mounted on the display

unit 1802. By pressing the surface of the touch panel 1803 with a finger of the user or the like, an item input operation, a coordinate position input operation, or the like can be performed on the display unit 1802.

Reference numeral 1804 denotes an FM (Frequency Modulation) sound source unit for storing music information, created by a music editor or the like, in a memory unit 1810 or an external memory unit 1812 as digital data, and reading out the information from such a memory, thereby performing FM modulation of the information. An electrical signal from the FM sound source unit 1804 is converted into an audible sound by a speaker unit 1805. A printer unit 1806 is used as an output terminal for the wordprocessor, the personal computer, the facsimile apparatus, and the copying machine.

Reference numeral 1807 denotes an image reader unit for photoelectrically reading original data. The image reader unit 1807 is arranged midway along the original convey passage and designed to read originals for facsimile and copy operations and other various originals.

Reference numeral 1808 denotes a transmission/reception unit for the facsimile (FAX) apparatus. The transmission/reception unit 1808 transmits original data read by the image reader unit 1807 by facsimile, and receives and decodes a sent facsimile signal. The transmission/reception unit 1808 has an interface function for external units. Reference numeral 1809 denotes a telephone unit having a general telephone function and various telephone functions such as an answering function.

Reference numeral 1810 denotes a memory unit including a ROM for storing system programs, manager programs, application programs, fonts, and dictionaries, a RAM for storing an application program loaded from the external memory unit 1812 and document information, a video RAM, and the like.

Reference numeral 1811 denotes a keyboard unit for inputting document information and various commands.

Reference numeral 1812 denotes an external memory unit using a floppy disk, a hard disk, and the like as a memory medium. The external memory unit 1812 serves to store document information, music and speech information, application programs of the user, and the like.

Fig. 13 is a perspective view of the information processing apparatus in Fig. 12.

Referring to Fig. 13, reference numeral 1901 denotes a flat panel display using the above liquid crystal panel, which displays various menus, graphic pattern information, document information, and the like. A coordinate input or item designation input operation can be performed on the flat panel display 1901 by pressing the surface of the touch panel 1803 with a finger of the user or the like. Reference numeral 1902 denotes a handset used when the apparatus is used

as a telephone set. A keyboard 1903 is detachably connected to the main body via a cord and is used to perform various document functions and input various data. This keyboard 1903 has various function keys 1904. Reference numeral 1905 denotes an insertion port through which a floppy disk is inserted into the external memory unit 1812.

Reference numeral 1906 denotes an original table on which an original to be read by the image reader unit 1807 is placed. The read original is discharged from the rear portion of the apparatus. In a facsimile receiving operation, received data is printed out by an ink-jet printer 1907.

When the above information processing apparatus is to serve as a personal computer or a wordprocessor, various kinds of information input through the keyboard unit 1811 are processed by the control unit 1801 in accordance with a predetermined program, and the resultant information is output, as an image, to the printer unit 1806.

When the information processing apparatus is to serve as the receiver of the facsimile apparatus, facsimile information input through the transmission/reception unit 1808 via a communication line is subjected to reception processing in the control unit 1801 in accordance with a predetermined program, and the resultant information is output, as a received image, to the printer unit 1806.

When the information processing apparatus is to serve as the copying machine, an original is read by the image reader unit 1807, and the read original data is output, as an image to be copied, to the printer unit 1806 via the control unit 1801. Note that when the information processing apparatus is to serve as the receiver of the facsimile apparatus, original data read by the image reader unit 1807 is subjected to transmission processing in the control unit 1801 in accordance with a predetermined program, and the resultant data is transmitted to a communication line via the transmission/reception unit 1808.

Note that the above information processing apparatus may be designed as an integrated apparatus incorporating an ink-jet printer in the main body, as shown in Fig. 14. In this case, the portability of the apparatus can be improved. The same reference numerals in Fig. 14 denote parts having the same functions as those in Fig. 13.

Fig. 3 shows the structure of an ink-jet head IJH for spraying ink on the layer 14 in the color filter as described above.

Referring to Fig. 3, the ink-jet head IJH mainly comprises a heater board 104 as a board on which a plurality of heaters 102 for heating an ink are formed, and a ceiling plate 106 mounted on the heater board 104. A plurality of discharging openings 108 are formed in the ceiling plate 106. Tunnel-like fluid passages 110 communicating with the discharging openings 108 are formed therebehind. The respective fluid

passages 110 are isolated from the adjacent fluid passages via partition walls 112. The respective fluid passages 110 are commonly connected to one ink chamber 114 at the rear side of the fluid passages. An ink is supplied to the ink chamber 114 via an ink inlet 116. This ink is supplied from the ink chamber 114 to each fluid passage 110.

The heater board 104 and the ceiling plate 106 are positioned such that the position of each heater 102 coincides with that of a corresponding fluid passage 110, and are assembled into the state shown in Fig. 3. Although Fig. 3 shows only two heaters 102, the heater 102 is arranged in correspondence with each fluid passage 110. When a predetermined driving signal is supplied to the heater 102 in the assembled state shown in Fig. 3, an ink above the heater 102 is boiled to produce a bubble, and the ink is pushed and discharged from the discharging opening 108 upon volume expansion of the ink. Therefore, the size of a bubble can be adjusted by controlling a driving pulse applied to the heater 102, e.g., controlling the magnitude of power. That is, the volume of the ink discharged from each discharging opening can be arbitrarily controlled.

Fig. 4 is a timing chart for explaining a method of controlling the amount of ink discharged by changing power supplied to each heater in this manner.

In this embodiment, two types of constant-voltage pulses are applied to each heater 102 to adjust the amount of ink discharged. The two pulses are a preheat pulse and a main heat pulse (to be simply referred to as a heat pulse hereinafter). The preheat pulse is a pulse for heating an ink to a predetermined temperature before the ink is actually discharged. The pulse width of this pulse is set to be smaller than a minimum pulse width t_5 required to discharge the ink. Therefore, the ink is not discharged by this preheat pulse. The preheat pulse is applied to each heater 102 to increase the initial temperature of the ink to a predetermined temperature in advance so as to always make the amount of ink discharged constant when a constant heat pulse is applied to the heater 102 afterward. In contrast to this, the temperature of the ink may be adjusted in advance by adjusting the width of a preheat pulse. In this case, for the same heat pulse, the amount of ink discharged can be changed. In addition, by heating ink before application of a heat pulse, the start time required to discharge the ink upon application of the heat pulse can be shortened to improve the responsibility.

The heat pulse is a pulse for actually discharging the ink. The pulse width of the heat pulse is set to be larger than the minimum pulse width t_5 required to discharge the ink. Energy generated by each heater 102 is proportional to the width (application time) of a heat pulse. Therefore, variations in the characteristics of the heaters 102 can be adjusted by adjusting the width of each heat pulse.

Note that the amount of ink discharged can also be adjusted by adjusting the interval between a preheat pulse and a heat pulse to control the dispersed state of heat upon application of the preheat pulse.

As is apparent from the above description, the amount of ink discharged can be controlled both by adjusting the application time of a preheat pulse and by adjusting the interval between application of a preheat pulse and that of a heat pulse. Therefore, by adjusting the application time of a preheat pulse or the interval between application of a preheat pulse and that of a heat pulse as needed, the amount of ink discharged or the responsibility of discharging of the ink with respect to an applied pulse can be arbitrarily adjusted.

Such adjustment of the amount of ink discharged will be described in detail next.

Assume that an ink is discharged in different amounts from discharging openings (nozzles) 108a, 108b, and 108c upon application of the same amount of energy, as shown in Fig. 4. More specifically, assume that when a predetermined amount of energy is applied at a predetermined temperature, the amount of ink discharged from the nozzle 108a is 36 pl (picoliters); the amount of ink discharged from the nozzle 108b, 40 pl; and the amount of ink discharged from the nozzle 108c, 40 pl, and the resistance of heaters 102a and 102b corresponding to the nozzles 108a and 108b is 200 Ω , and the resistance of a heater 102c corresponding to the nozzle 108c is 210 Ω . Assume that the amounts of ink discharged from the nozzles 108a, 108b, and 108c are to be adjusted to 40 pl.

The widths of a preheat pulse and a heat pulse may be adjusted to adjust the amounts of ink discharged from the nozzles 108a, 108b, and 108c to the same amount. Various combinations of the widths of preheat pulses and heat pulses are conceivable. In this case, the amounts of energy generated by heat pulses are made equal for the three nozzles, and the amounts of ink discharged are adjusted by adjusting the widths of preheat pulses.

Since the heaters 102a and 102b for the nozzles 108a and 108b have the same resistance, i.e., 200 Ω , the amounts of energy generated by heat pulses can be made equal by applying voltage pulses having the same width to the heaters 102a and 102b. In this case, the width of each voltage pulse is set to be t3 which is larger than the width t5. An ink is discharged in different amounts, i.e., 36 pl and 40 pl, from the nozzles 108a and 108b upon application of the same amount of energy. In order to increase the amount of ink discharged from the nozzle 108a, a preheat pulse having a width t2 larger than a width t1 of a preheat pulse applied to the heater 102b is applied to the heater 102a. With this operation, the amounts of ink discharged from the heaters 108a and 108b can be adjusted to 40 pl.

The heater 102c for the nozzle 108c has a resistance of 210 Ω , which is higher than the resistance of the two remaining heaters 102a and 102b. For this reason, in order to cause the heater 102c to generate the same amount of energy as that generated by the two remaining heaters, the width of a heat pulse must be set to be larger than that of the above heat pulse. In this case, therefore, the width of the heat pulse is set to be t4 which is larger than the width t3. Since the amounts of ink discharged from the nozzles 108b and 108c upon application of a predetermined amount of energy are the same, the width of a preheat pulse required is equal to that of a preheat pulse applied to the heater 102b. That is, a preheat pulse having the width t1 is applied to the heater 102c.

In the above manner, the same amount of ink can be discharged from the nozzles 108a, 108b, and 108c which discharge an ink in different amounts upon application of a predetermined amount of energy. In addition, the amounts of ink discharged may be intentionally made to differ from each other.

Fig. 5 shows the arrangement of an apparatus for manufacturing the color filter shown in Figs. 1A or 1B and 2.

Referring to Fig. 5, a manufacturing apparatus 20 comprises an X-Y table 22 mounted on a base (not shown) and capable of moving in the X and Y directions in Fig. 5, and an ink-jet head IJH fixed on a base via a support member (not shown) above the X-Y table 22. A glass substrate 12 on which a light-shielding grating 10b and a layer 14 to be colored (see Fig. 2) are formed by the above method is placed on the X-Y table 22. The ink-jet head IJH includes a red head 120a for discharging a red ink, a green head 120b for discharging a green ink, and a blue head 120c for discharging a blue ink. These heads 120a, 120b, and 120c are designed to discharge inks independently.

In the manufacturing apparatus 20 having the above arrangement, an R (red), G (green), or B (blue) ink is discharged into a desired frame of the light-shielding grating 10b while the X-Y table 22 moves with respect to the ink-jet head IJH in the X and Y directions. In this manner, each frame of the light-shielding grating 10b is colored to complete a color filter.

Fig. 6 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of the manufacturing apparatus 20.

Referring to Fig. 6, X- and Y-direction driving motors 36 and 38 for driving the X-Y table 22 in the X and Y directions are connected to a CPU 30 for controlling the overall operation of the manufacturing apparatus 20 via X and Y motor driving circuits 32 and 34. The ink-jet head IJH is also connected to the CPU 30 via a head driving circuit 40. Furthermore, X and Y encoders 42 and 44 for detecting the position of the X-Y table 22 is connected to the CPU 30. With this arrangement, position information on the X-Y table 22 is input to the CPU 30. In addition, a control program in a pro-

droplet is discharged after the first ink droplet is absorbed in the layer to be colored to a certain degree, realizing high-quality coloring free from color nonuniformity. When one filter element is to be colored by a plurality of ink droplets, the droplets can be discharged and overlaid on a same spot or can be discharged on a different spot by shifting the spot little by little.

As shown in Fig. 8, R (red), G (green), and B (blue) inks are discharged to the layer 14 to be colored which is formed in the above manner in accordance with the pattern of the light-shielding grating 10b by the ink-jet method. Alternatively, as described above, both the pattern of the light-shielding grating 10b and the pattern of R, G, and B may be formed by discharging the inks by the ink-jet system. The volume of each ink dot at this time is V_0 (pl: pico-liter), as described above. The ink-jet system comprises a system using heat energy and a system using mechanical energy, either of which can be suitably used.

An ink is not particularly limited as long as it can be used for the ink-jet system. The dyes or pigments of R, G, and B may be selected in accordance with application purposes. Any solvent composition can be used as long as it can be used for the ink-jet system, and a composition is not particularly limited.

A dye and a pigment can be suitably used as coloring materials. The above relation is hardly affected by the kind of coloring material, but depends on an ink solvent.

Preferable examples of an ink solvent to be used are water generally used as an ink-jet ink, and a water-soluble organic solvent used by being mixed with water. Examples of the water-soluble organic solvent are alkyl alcohols having 1 to 4 carbon atoms (e.g., methyl alcohol, ethyl alcohol, n-propyl alcohol, isopropyl alcohol, n-butyl alcohol, sec-butyl alcohol, and tert-butyl alcohol), amides (e.g., dimethylformamide and dimethylacetamide), ketones or ketoalcohols (e.g., acetone and diacetone alcohol), ethers (e.g., tetrahydrofuran and dioxane), polyalkylene glycols (e.g., polyethylene glycol and polypropylene glycol), alkylene glycols containing an alkylene group having 2 to 6 carbon atoms (e.g., ethylene glycol, propylene glycol, butylene glycol, triethylene glycol, 1,2,6-hexanetriol, thiodiglycol, hexylene glycol, and diethylene glycol), lower alkyl ethers of a polyhydric alcohol (e.g., glycerine, ethylene glycol monomethyl (or monoethyl) ether, diethylene glycol methyl (or ethyl) ether, and triethylene glycol monomethyl (or monoethyl) ether), N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone, 2-pyrrolidone, and 1,3-dimethyl-2-imidazolidinone. The ink solvent is not particularly limited as long as it does not cause any problem in ink discharging performance of the ink-jet head.

Of these examples, more preferable examples are alkyl alcohols containing an alkylene group having 2 to 6 carbon atoms (e.g., ethylene glycol, propylene glycol, butylene glycol, triethylene glycol, 1,2,6-hex-

anetriol, thiodiglycol, hexylene glycol, and diethylene glycol), and N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone. By using one or a plurality of these solvents, the effect of the present invention can be achieved sufficiently. In addition, an additive such as a surfactant may be added to the ink.

As shown in Fig. 9, a protective film 15 is coated on the layer 14 to be colored to which the ink is discharged by the ink-jet system. This arrangement can greatly improve the process resistance, and particularly resistance to solvents. If the layer 14 to be colored itself has a sufficient process resistance, the protective film 15 can be eliminated, but generally formed.

A coating method may be the same as that of coating the layer to be colored. The material of the protective film 15 is not particularly limited as long as it is a protective film material used for a general color filter. An acrylic or epoxy thermosetting/photocuring material can be suitably used.

Further, the coated substrate is baked by an oven, a hotplate, or the like to form a film. The thickness of this protective film, which is determined by required properties and the like, is about 0.1 to 10 μm .

According to the color filter formed by the above ink-jet method, the number of steps is greatly decreased. The color filter can be manufactured at a reduced material cost. It has satisfactory process resistances such as heat resistance and resistance to solvents, and also satisfactory ink reception ability and dot resolution. Therefore, the color filter performance is very high as a color liquid crystal display free from ink blurring, color mixing, and white omissions.

Examples in which color filters are manufactured by the manufacturing method of this embodiment will be described next.

(Example 1)

A thermosetting resin composition consisting of a mixture of hydroxypropyl cellulose (HPC-H available from Nihon Soda) and dimethylol hydroxyethylene urea (Sumitex resin NS-11 available from Sumitomo Kasei) was spin-coated on a glass substrate on which a light-shielding grating was formed so as to have a dry film thickness of 0.6 μm . The resultant structure was pre-baked at 110°C for 10 minutes. This structure served as a layer to be colored. By the above-mentioned manufacturing apparatus, the layer to be colored was colored in the matrix pattern of R, G, and B with pigment inks. The amount of ink discharged of each color was 40 pl at that time. The resultant structure was baked at 230°C for 1 hour to advance a crosslinking reaction, setting the layer to be colored. Subsequently, the resultant structure was washed to remove dust. Upon drying, a two-pack thermosetting resin material was spin-coated thereon to have a film thickness of 1 μm . The resultant structure was heat-treated at 250°C for 30 minutes to set

the coated material. As a result, a liquid crystal color filter was formed. A relation between the thickness of the layer to be colored and the volume of a droplet was $0.6 = 40/66.7 > 40/500 = 0.08$.

(Example 2)

A liquid crystal color filter was formed in the same manner as in Example 1 except for a thermosetting resin composition consisting of a mixture of hydroxyethyl cellulose (AH-15 available from Fuji Chemical) and methylated methylolmelamine (M-6 available from Sumitomo Kasei).

(Example 3)

A liquid crystal color filter was formed in the same manner as in Example 1 except that an ink was a dye ink.

(Example 4)

A resin composition consisting of a mixture of hydroxypropyl cellulose (HPC-H available from Nihon Sotatsu) and dimethylol hydroxyethylene (Sumitex resin NS-3spe available from Sumitomo Kasei) was spin-coated on a glass substrate on which a light-shielding grating was formed so as to have a dry film thickness of $0.5 \mu\text{m}$. The resultant structure was pre-baked at 120°C for 10 minutes. This structure served as a layer to be colored. By the above-mentioned manufacturing apparatus, the layer to be colored was colored in the matrix pattern of R, G, and B with pigment inks. The amount of ink discharged of each color was 50 pl at that time. The resultant structure was heated at 220°C for 50 minutes to advance a cross-linking reaction, setting the layer to be colored. Subsequently, the resultant structure was washed to remove dust. Upon drying, a two-pack thermosetting resin material was spin-coated thereon to have a film thickness of $1 \mu\text{m}$. The resultant structure was heat-treated at 250°C for 30 minutes to set the coated material. As a result, a liquid crystal color filter was formed. A relation between the thickness of the layer to be colored and the volume of a droplet was $0.5 = 50/100 > 50/500 = 0.1$.

(Example 5)

A liquid crystal color filter was formed in the same manner as in Example 4 except that an ink was a dye ink.

The liquid crystal color filters formed in Examples 1 to 5 were observed with an optical microscope. Any faults such as discoloration, mixing of R, G, and B colors, color nonuniformity, ink blurring, and white omissions were not observed.

A series of operations, e.g., formation of ITO and

aligning films and sealing of a liquid crystal material, were performed by using the obtained color filter, thereby forming a color-liquid crystal driving apparatus. When the manufactured color liquid crystal driving apparatus was driven within a temperature range of 0°C to 40°C continuously for 1,000 hours, no failure occurred. Further, when this color liquid crystal driving apparatus was set on an OHP and driven to perform a reflection operation continuously for 1,000 hours, no change in transmittance and color tone was confirmed.

(Comparative Example 1)

A liquid crystal color filter was formed in the same manner as in Example 1 except that a resin composition for a layer to be colored was coated to have a dry film thickness of $0.05 \mu\text{m}$. A relation between the thickness of the layer to be colored and the volume of a droplet was $0.05 = 40/800 < 40/500 = 0.08$.

(Comparative Example 2)

A liquid crystal color filter was formed in the same manner as in Example 4 except that a resin composition for a layer to be colored was coated to have a dry film thickness of $0.08 \mu\text{m}$. A relation between the thickness of the layer to be colored and the volume of a droplet was $0.08 = 50/625 < 50/500 = 0.1$.

The liquid crystal color filters formed in Comparative Examples 1 and 2 were observed with an optical microscope. No discoloration occurred but faults of color nonuniformity and color mixing were observed.

As has been described above, according to this embodiment, assume that the thickness of the layer to be colored is to be $d (\mu\text{m})$, and that the volume of a droplet is to be $V_0 \text{ pl}$ (pico-liters). If $d > V_0/500$, preferably $d > V_0/200$, and more preferably $d > V_0/100$ are established, ink blurring which may occur in a very thin layer to be colored is prevented to prevent color mixing between adjacent filter elements, and the like. Therefore, a color filter can be manufactured without causing any ink blurring and any color mixing. Various changes and modifications of the above embodiment can be made without departing the scope and spirit of the invention.

For example, in the above embodiments, the ink-jet head is fixed, and the X-Y stage is moved. However, the ink-jet head may be moved while the stage is fixed. As the ink-jet head, a so-called piezoelectric type head using mechanical energy converters such as piezoelectric elements may be used. In this case, the volume of the ink discharged can be easily adjusted by adjusting the applied voltage of a driving pulse. When a bipolar driving operation is to be performed, the ink volume can be adjusted by adjusting both or either of bipolar driving pulses.

The present invention can be applied to a single-

color filter and a filter of a type having a plurality of single-color filters of different colors stacked on each other.

According to the above description, the present invention is applied to the print apparatus of the system, among various ink-jet recording systems, which has a means (e.g., an electricity-to-heat converter or laser light) for generating heat energy as energy used to discharge an ink, and changes the state of an ink by using the heat energy. According to this system, a high-density, high-definition recording operation can be realized.

As for the typical structure and principle, it is preferable that the basic structure disclosed in, for example, U.S. Patent No. 4,723,129 or 4,740,796 is employed. The aforesaid method can be adapted to both a so-called on-demand type apparatus and a continuous type apparatus. In particular, a satisfactory effect can be obtained when the on-demand type apparatus is employed because of the structure arranged in such a manner that one or more drive signals, which rapidly raise the temperature of an electricity-to-heat converter disposed to face a sheet or a fluid passage which holds the fluid (ink) to a level higher than levels at which film boiling takes place are applied to the electricity-to-heat converter in accordance with recording information so as to generate heat energy in the electricity-to-heat converter and to cause the heat effecting surface of the recording head to take place film boiling so that bubbles can be formed in the fluid (ink) to correspond to the one or more drive signals. The enlargement/contraction of the bubble will cause the fluid (ink) to be discharged through a discharging opening so that one or more droplets are formed. If a pulse shape drive signal is employed, the bubble can be enlarged/contracted immediately and properly, causing a further preferred effect to be obtained because the fluid (ink) can be discharged while revealing excellent responsibility.

It is preferable that a pulse drive signal disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,463,359 or 4,345,262 is employed. If conditions disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,313,124 which is an invention relating to the temperature rising ratio at the heat effecting surface are employed, a satisfactory recording result can be obtained.

As an alternative to the structure (linear fluid passage or perpendicular fluid passage) of the recording head disclosed in each of the aforesaid inventions and having an arrangement that discharge ports, fluid passages and electricity-to-heat converters are combined, a structure having an arrangement that the heat effecting surface is disposed in a bent region and disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,558,333 or 4,459,600 may be employed. In addition, the following structures may be employed: a structure having an arrangement that a common slit is formed to serve as a discharge section of a plurality of electricity-to-heat

converters and disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 59-123670; and a structure disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 59-138461 in which an opening for absorbing pressure waves of heat energy is disposed to correspond to the discharge section.

Furthermore, as a recording head of the full line type having a length corresponding to the maximum width of a recording medium which can be recorded by the recording apparatus, either the construction which satisfies its length by a combination of a plurality of recording heads as disclosed in the above specifications or the construction as a single full line type recording head which has integrally been formed can be used.

In addition, the invention is effective for a recording head of the freely exchangeable chip type which enables electrical connection to the recording apparatus main body or supply of ink from the main device by being mounted onto the apparatus main body, or for the case by use of a recording head of the cartridge type provided integrally on the recording head itself.

It is preferred to additionally employ the recording head restoring means and the auxiliary means provided as the component of the present invention because the effect of the present invention can be further stabilized. Specifically, it is preferable to employ a recording head capping means, a cleaning means, a pressurizing or suction means, an electricity-to-heat converter, an another heating element or a sub-heating means constituted by combining them and a sub-emitting mode in which an emitting is performed independently from the recording emitting in order to stably perform the recording operation.

Although a fluid ink is employed in the aforesaid embodiment of the present invention, an ink which is solidified at the room temperature or lower and as well as softened at the room temperature, an ink in the form of a fluid at the room temperature, or an ink which is formed into a fluid when the recording signal is supplied may be employed because the aforesaid ink-jet method is ordinarily arranged in such a manner that the temperature of ink is controlled in a range from 30°C or higher to 70°C or lower so as to make the viscosity of the ink to be included in a stable discharge range.

Furthermore, an ink which is solidified when it is caused to stand, and liquified when heat energy is supplied in accordance with a recording signal can be adapted to the present invention to positively prevent a temperature rise caused by heat energy by utilizing the temperature rise as energy of state transition from the solid state to the liquid state or to prevent ink evaporation. In any case, an ink which is liquified when heat energy is supplied in accordance with a recording signal so as to be discharged in the form of fluid ink, or an ink which is liquified only after heat en-

ergy is supplied, e.g., an ink which starts to solidify when it reaches a recording medium, can be adapted to the present invention. In the aforesaid case, the ink may be of a type which is held as fluid or solid material in a recess of a porous sheet or a through hole at a position to face the electricity-to-heat converter as disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 54-56847 or Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 60-71260. It is the most preferred way for the ink to be adapted to the aforesaid film boiling method.

As has been described above, according to this embodiment, assume that the thickness of the layer to be colored is to be $d(\mu\text{m})$, and that the volume of a droplet is to be V_0 (pl: pico-liters). If $d > V_0/500$ is established, ink blurring which occurs in a very thin layer to be colored is prevented to prevent color mixing between adjacent filter elements, and the like. Therefore, a color filter can be manufactured without causing any ink blurring and any color mixing.

In addition, droplets are discharged by using the ink-jet head. With this arrangement, a color filter having filter elements in a plurality of colors can be manufactured by one step, achieving a reduction in cost of the color filter.

The present invention is not limited to the above embodiments and various changes and modifications can be made within the spirit and scope of the present invention. Therefore, to apprise the public of the scope of the present invention the following claims are made.

Claims

1. A manufacturing method for a color filter (10) formed by forming a layer (14) to be colored on a transparent substrate (12), and discharging an ink colored in a predetermined color to said layer for coloring said layer, characterized in that when a thickness of said layer to be colored is assumed to be $d(\mu\text{m})$ and a volume of said ink to be discharged at one discharge is to be V_0 (pl: pico-liter), the thickness of said layer to be colored and the volume of said ink are adjusted to establish $d > V_0/500$.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the thickness of said layer to be colored and the volume of said ink are further adjusted to establish $d > V_0/200$.
3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the thickness of said layer to be colored and the volume of said ink are further adjusted to establish $d > V_0/100$.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined color comprises three colors of

red, green, and blue, or four colors of red, green, blue, and black.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein discharge of said ink to said layer to be colored is performed using an ink-jet head (IJH) for discharging an ink to perform coloring.
6. The method according to claim 5, wherein said ink-jet head is a head for discharging an ink by using heat energy, said ink-jet head having a heat energy generator (102) for generating heat energy applied to an ink.
7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the volume of said ink to be discharged is controlled by changing a driving pulse applied to said heat energy generator.
8. The method according to claim 1, wherein said layer to be colored is divided into a plurality of rectangular filter elements (10a), and each filter element is formed in a rectangular shape having shorter sides of 50 to 100 μm and longer sides of 150 to 450 μm .
9. A color filter formed by forming a layer (14) to be colored on a transparent substrate (12), and discharging an ink colored in a predetermined color to said layer for coloring said layer, characterized in that when a thickness of said layer to be colored is assumed to be $d(\mu\text{m})$ and a volume of said ink discharged at one discharge is to be V_0 (pl: pico-liter), said color filter is manufactured by adjusting the thickness of said layer to be colored and the volume of said ink so as to establish $d > V_0/500$.
10. The color filter according to claim 9, wherein said layer to be colored is divided into a plurality of rectangular filter elements (10a), and each filter element is formed in a rectangular shape having shorter sides of 50 to 100 μm and longer sides of 150 to 450 μm .
11. A liquid crystal display apparatus using a color filter (10) formed by forming a layer (14) to be colored on a transparent substrate (12), and discharging an ink colored in a predetermined color to said layer for coloring said layer, characterized by comprising: a color filter (10) manufactured by adjusting a thickness of said layer to be colored and a volume of said ink to establish $d > V_0/500$ when the thickness of said layer to be colored is assumed to be $d(\mu\text{m})$ and the volume of said ink discharged at one discharge is to be V_0 (pl: pico-

liter); and

a substrate (54) opposing said color filter,
wherein a liquid crystal compound (52) is
sealed between said substrates.

5

12. The liquid crystal display apparatus according to
claim 11, wherein said layer to be colored is div-
ided into a plurality of rectangular filter elements
(10a), and each filter element is formed in a rec-
tangular shape having shorter sides of 50 to 100
 μm and longer sides of 150 to 450 μm .

10

13. An apparatus having a liquid crystal display ap-
paratus using a color filter (10) formed by forming
a layer (14) to be colored on a transparent sub-
strate (12), and discharging an ink colored in a
predetermined color to said layer for coloring said
layer, characterized by comprising:

15

a liquid crystal display apparatus (1901)
having a color filter (10) manufactured by adjust-
ing a thickness of said layer to be colored and a
volume of said ink to be discharged to establish
 $d > V_0/500$ when the thickness of said layer to be
colored is assumed to be d (μm) and the volume
of said ink discharged at one discharge is to be
 V_0 (pl: pico-liter), and a substrate (54) opposing
said color filter, wherein a liquid crystal compound
(52) is sealed between said substrates; and

20

25

image signal output means (1801) for out-
putting an image signal to said liquid crystal dis-
play apparatus.

30

14. The apparatus having a liquid crystal display ap-
paratus according to claim 13, wherein said layer
to be colored is divided into a plurality of rectan-
gular filter elements (10a), and each filter ele-
ment is formed in a rectangular shape having
shorter sides of 50 to 100 μm and longer sides of
150 to 450 μm .

35

40

15. A method of forming a color filter by introducing
a color material such as an ink or dye into a layer
so that the thickness d of the layer is greater than
about $1/500$ th, of the volume V_0 of the coloring
material introduced at one time.

45

16. A color filter, a display incorporating such a color
filter or apparatus incorporating such a color filter
wherein the color filter comprises a layer having
a thickness d greater than about $1/500$ th of the
volume of the coloring material introduced at one
time.

50

55

FIG. 1A

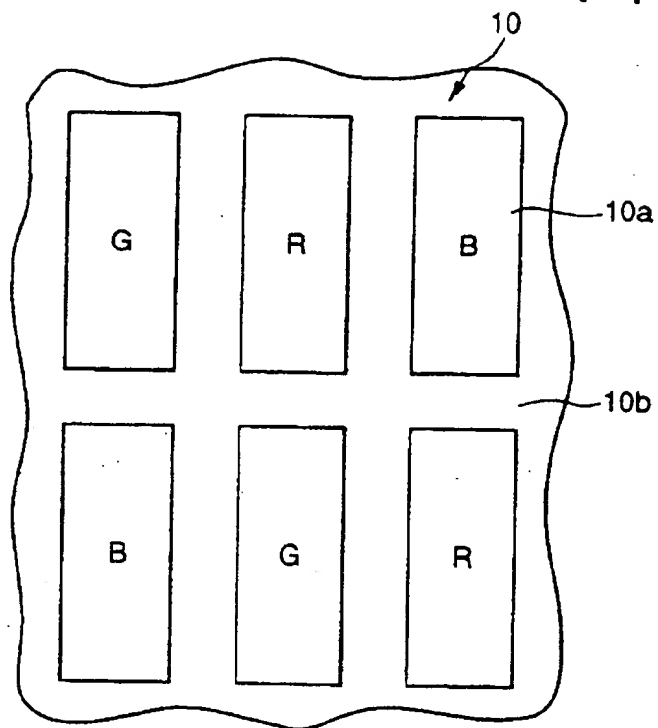


FIG. 1B

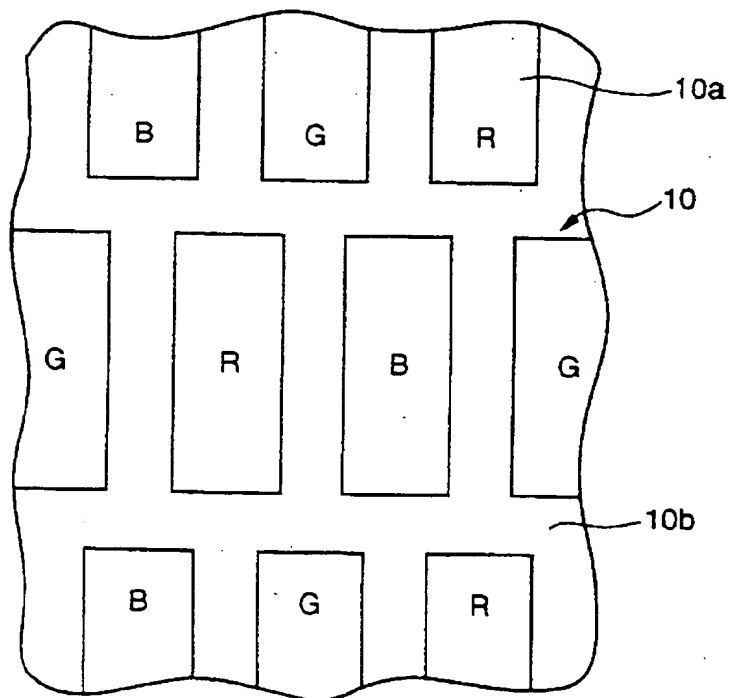


FIG. 2

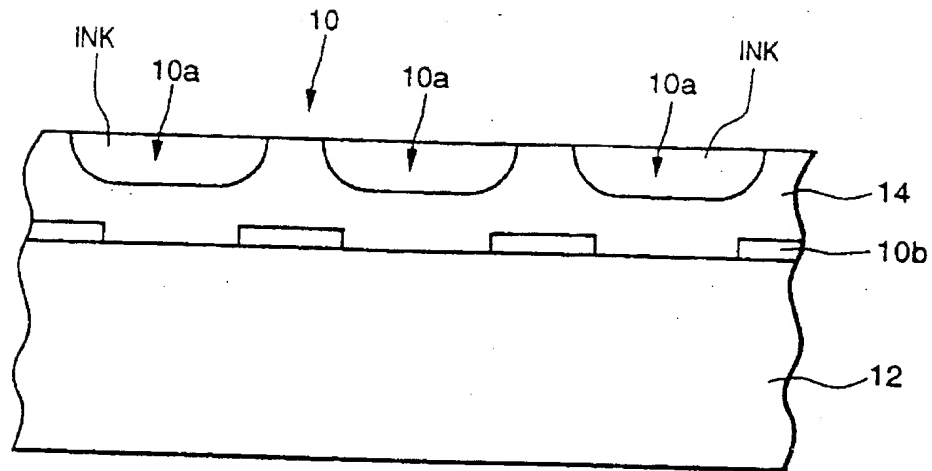


FIG. 3

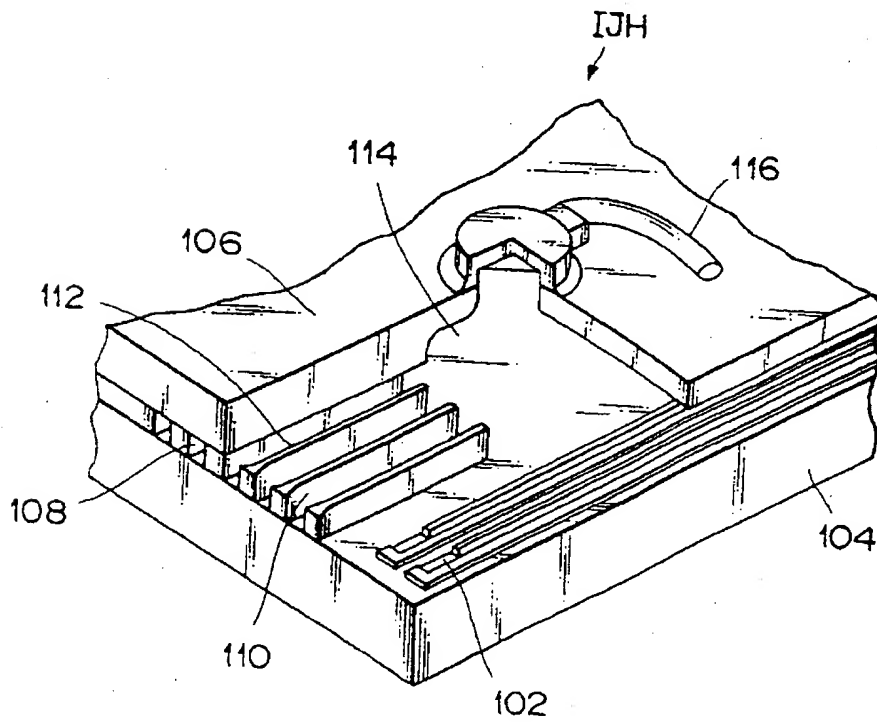


FIG. 4

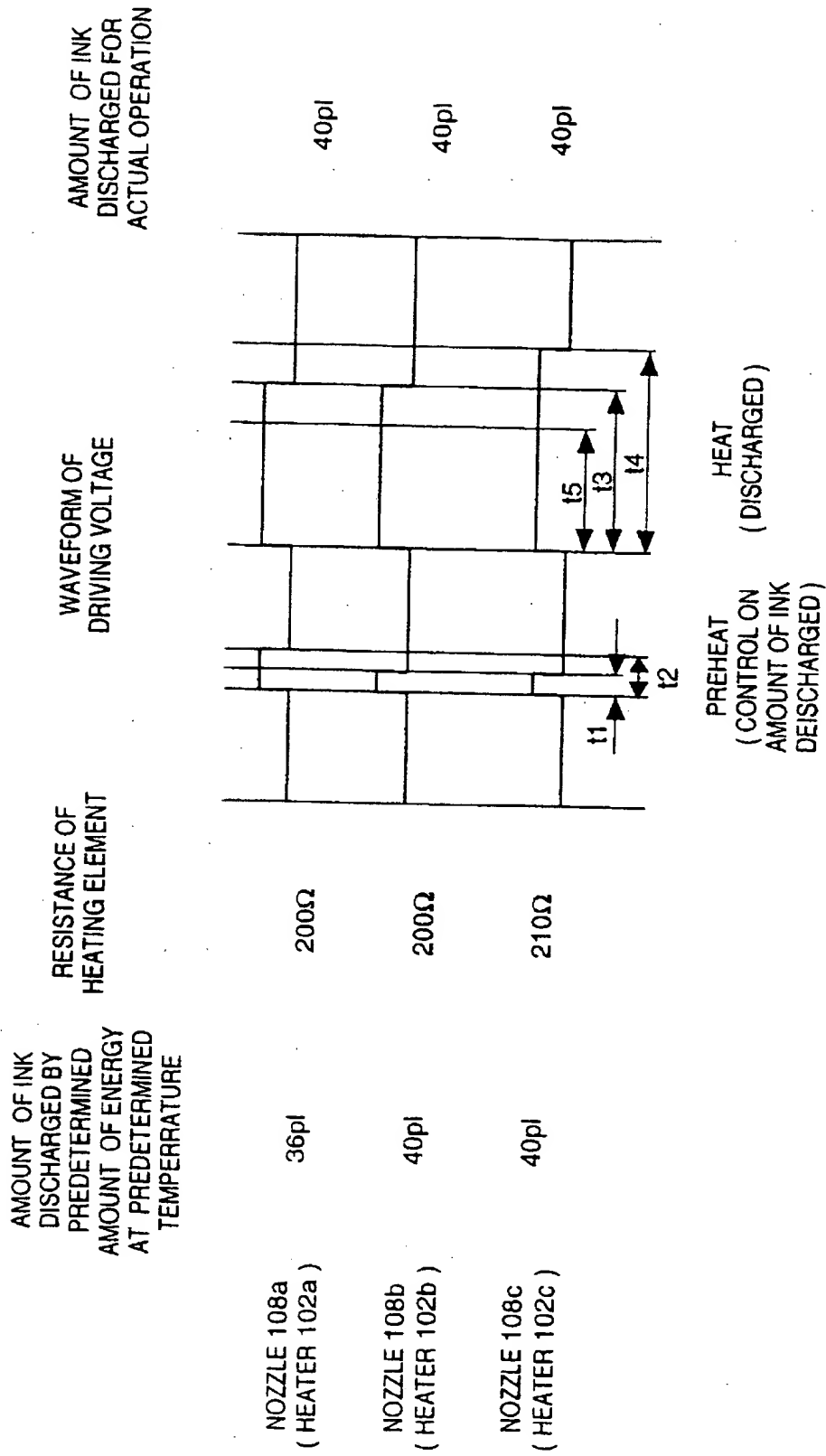


FIG. 5

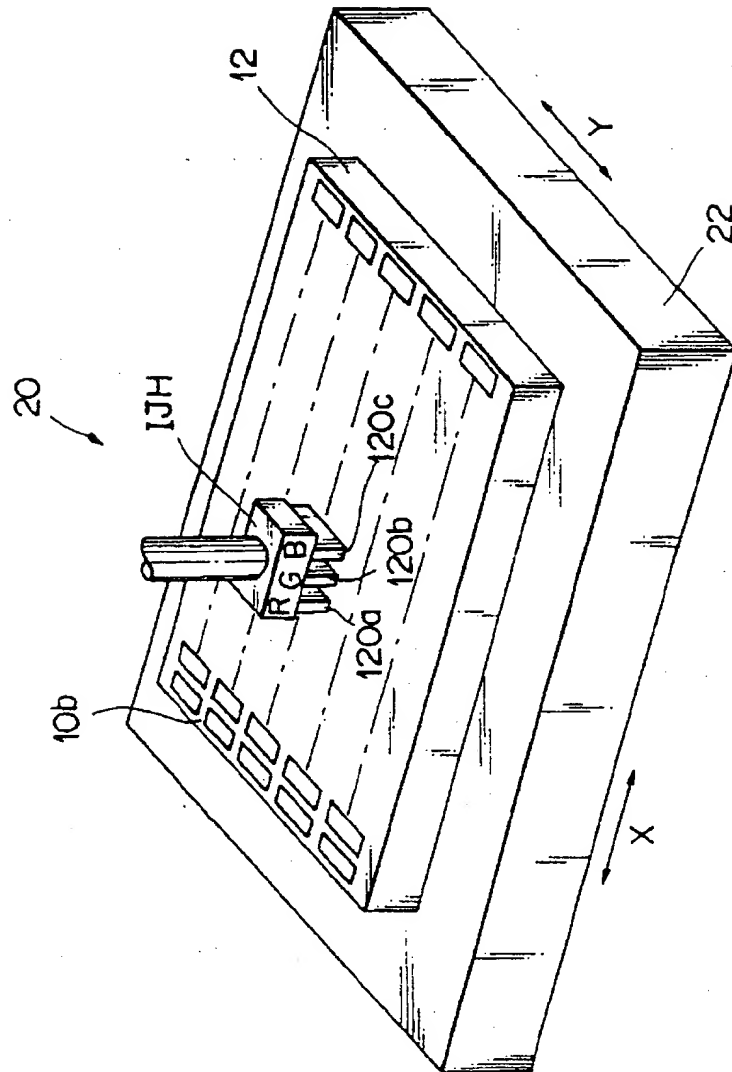


FIG. 6

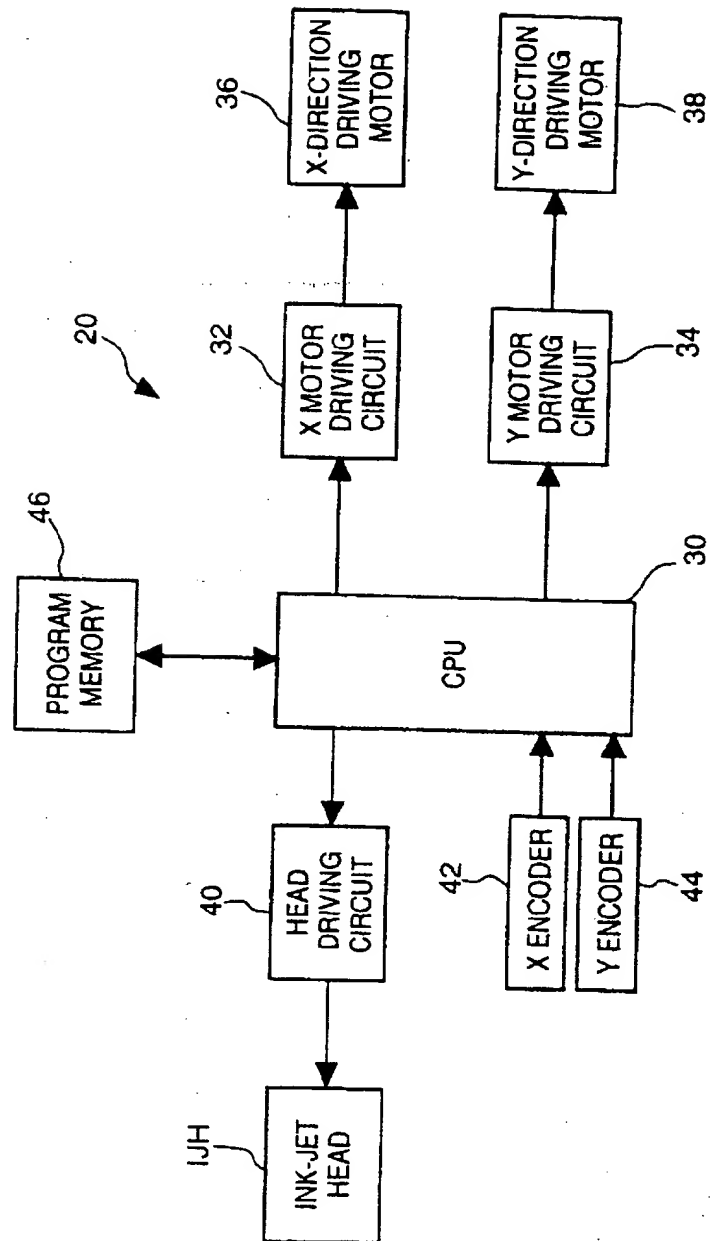


FIG. 7

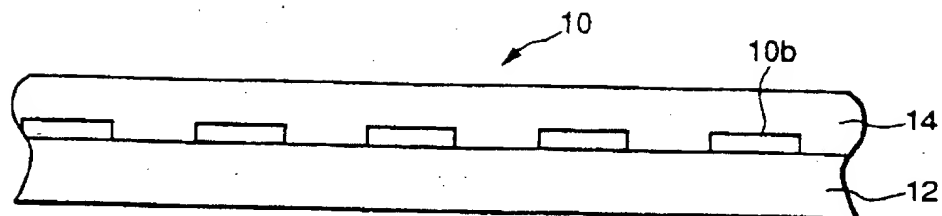


FIG. 8

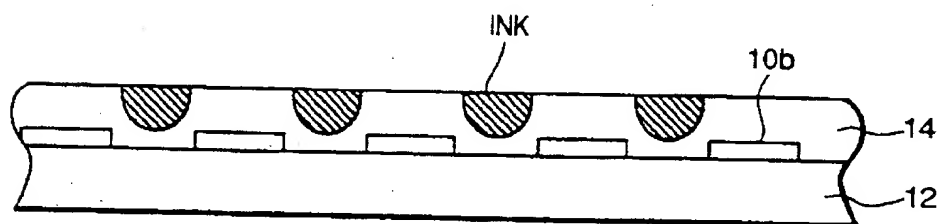


FIG. 9

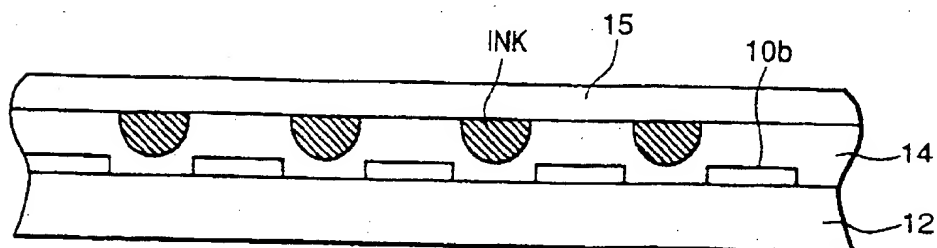
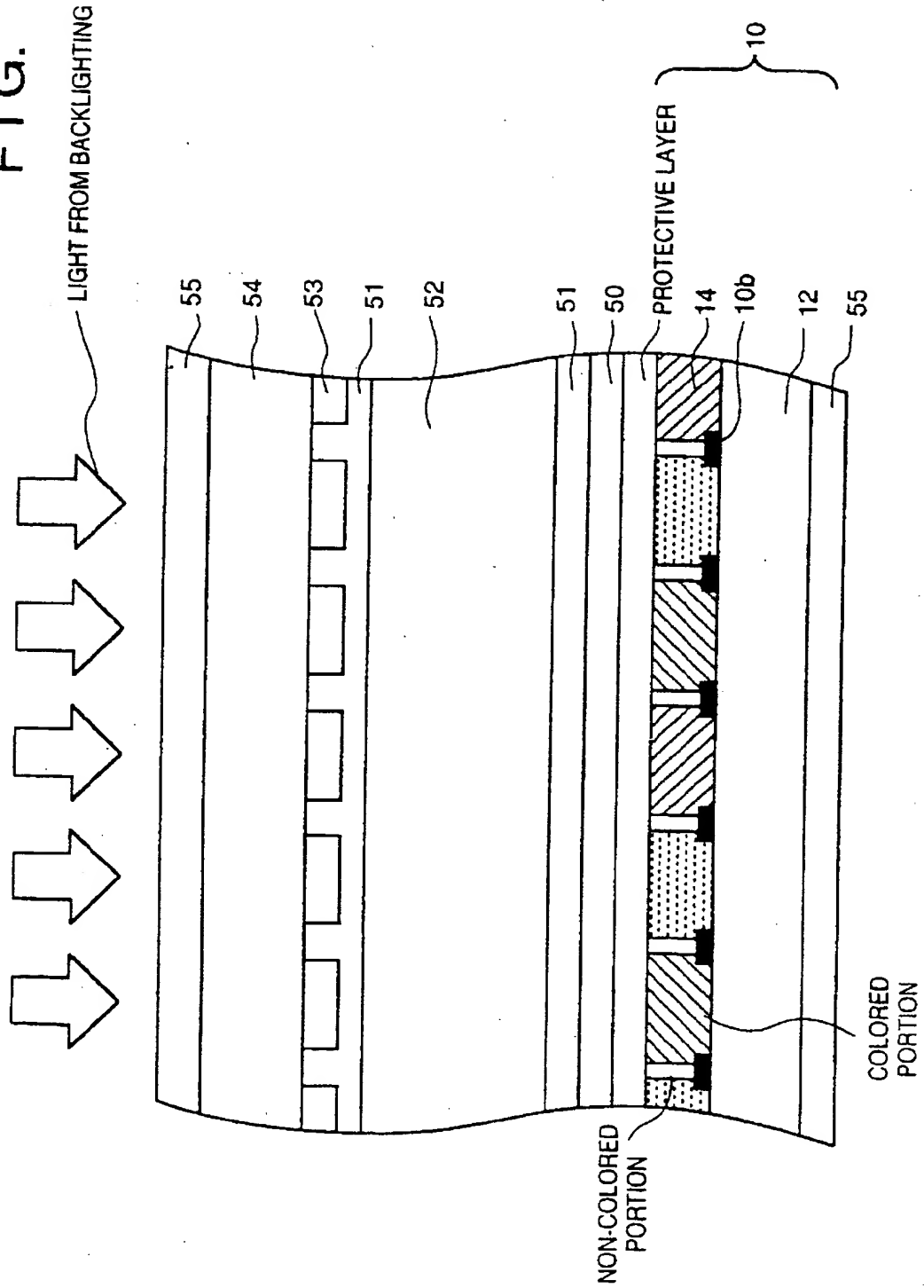


FIG. 10



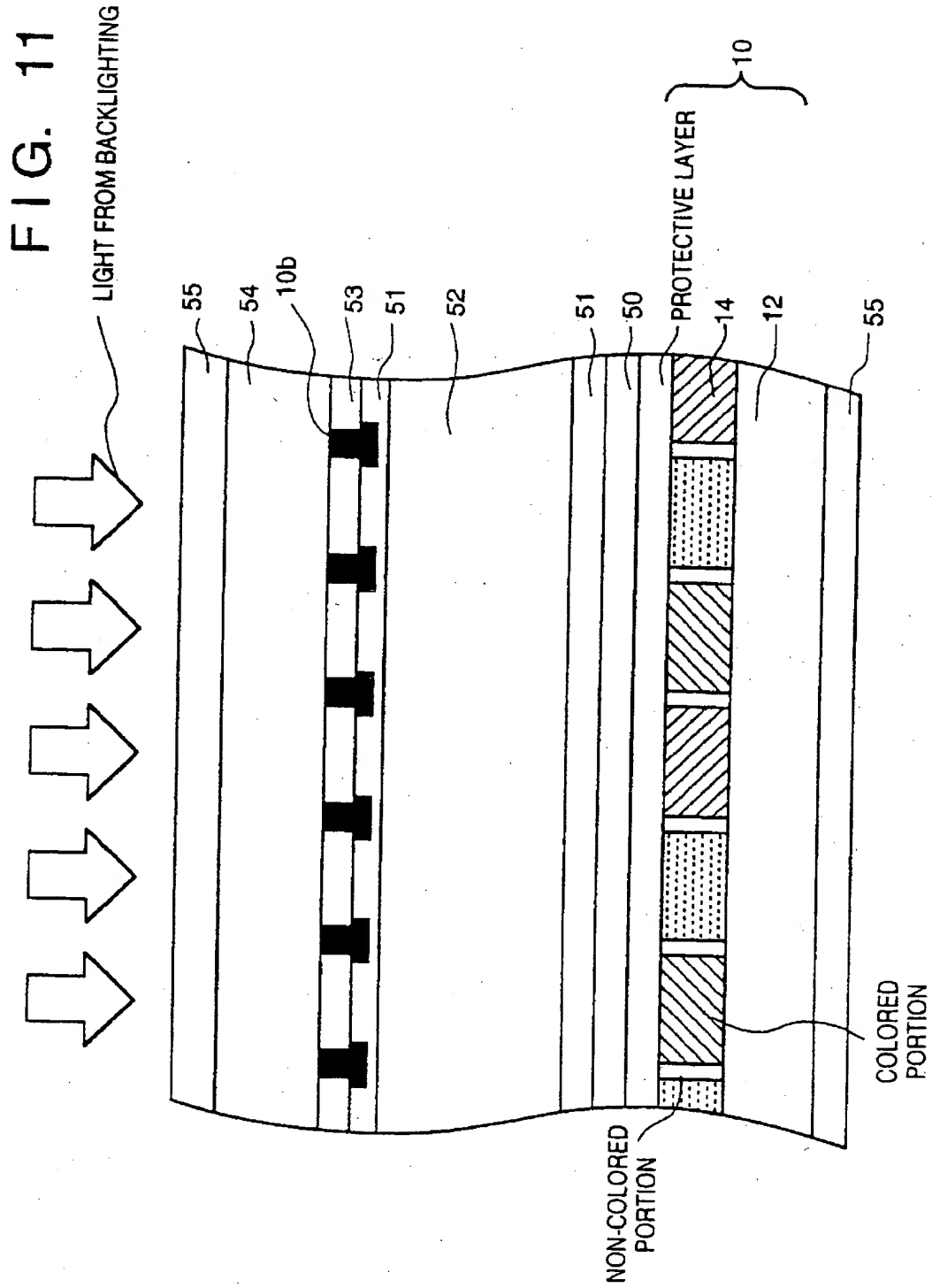


FIG. 12

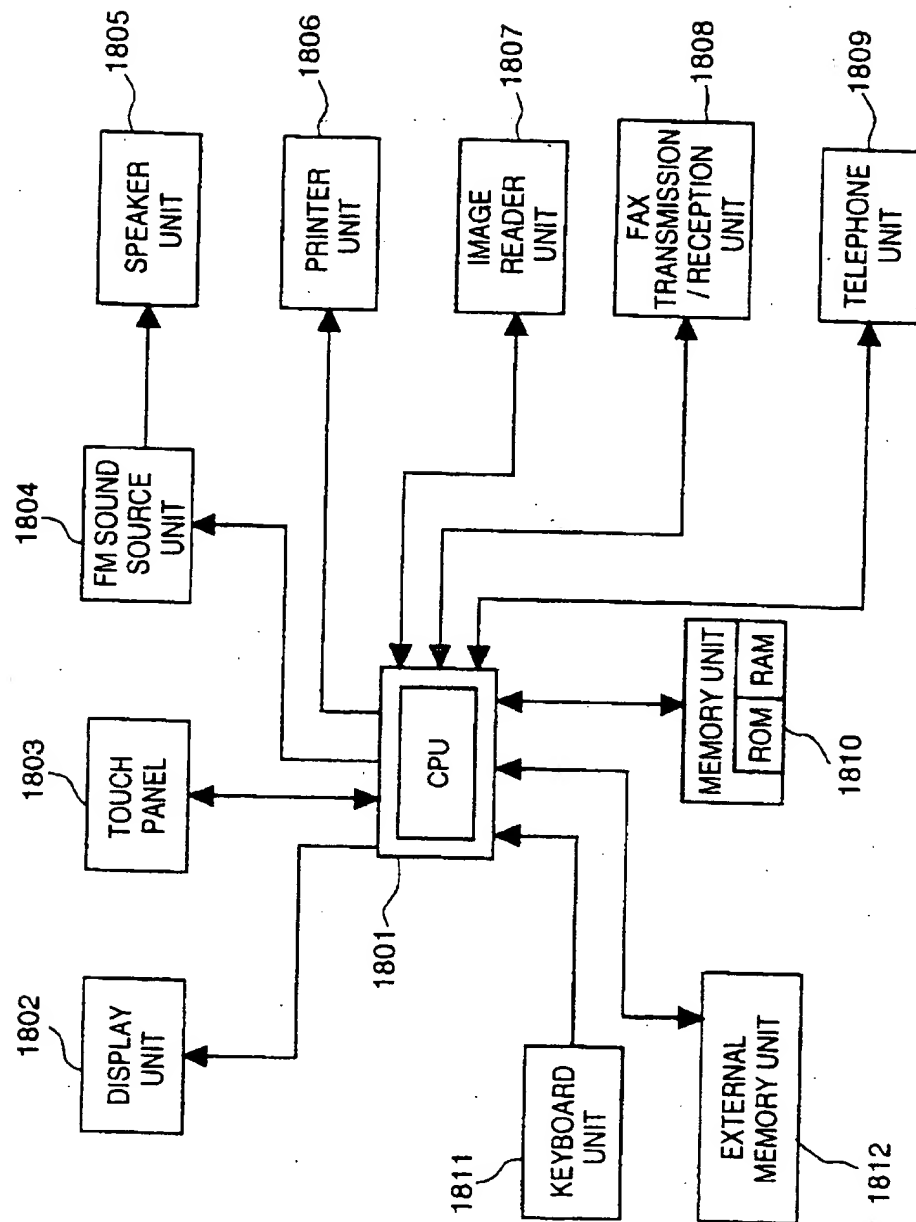


FIG. 13

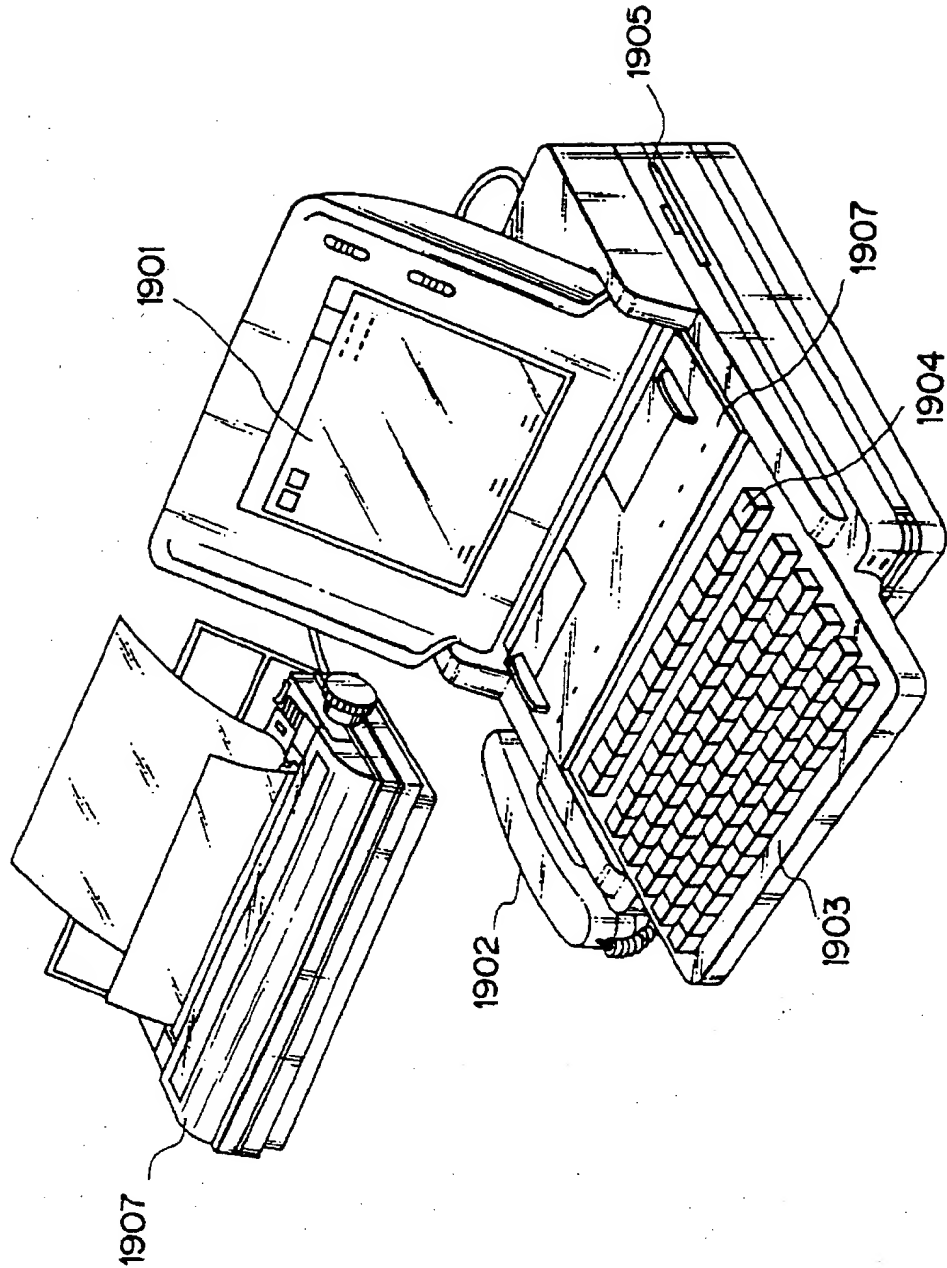
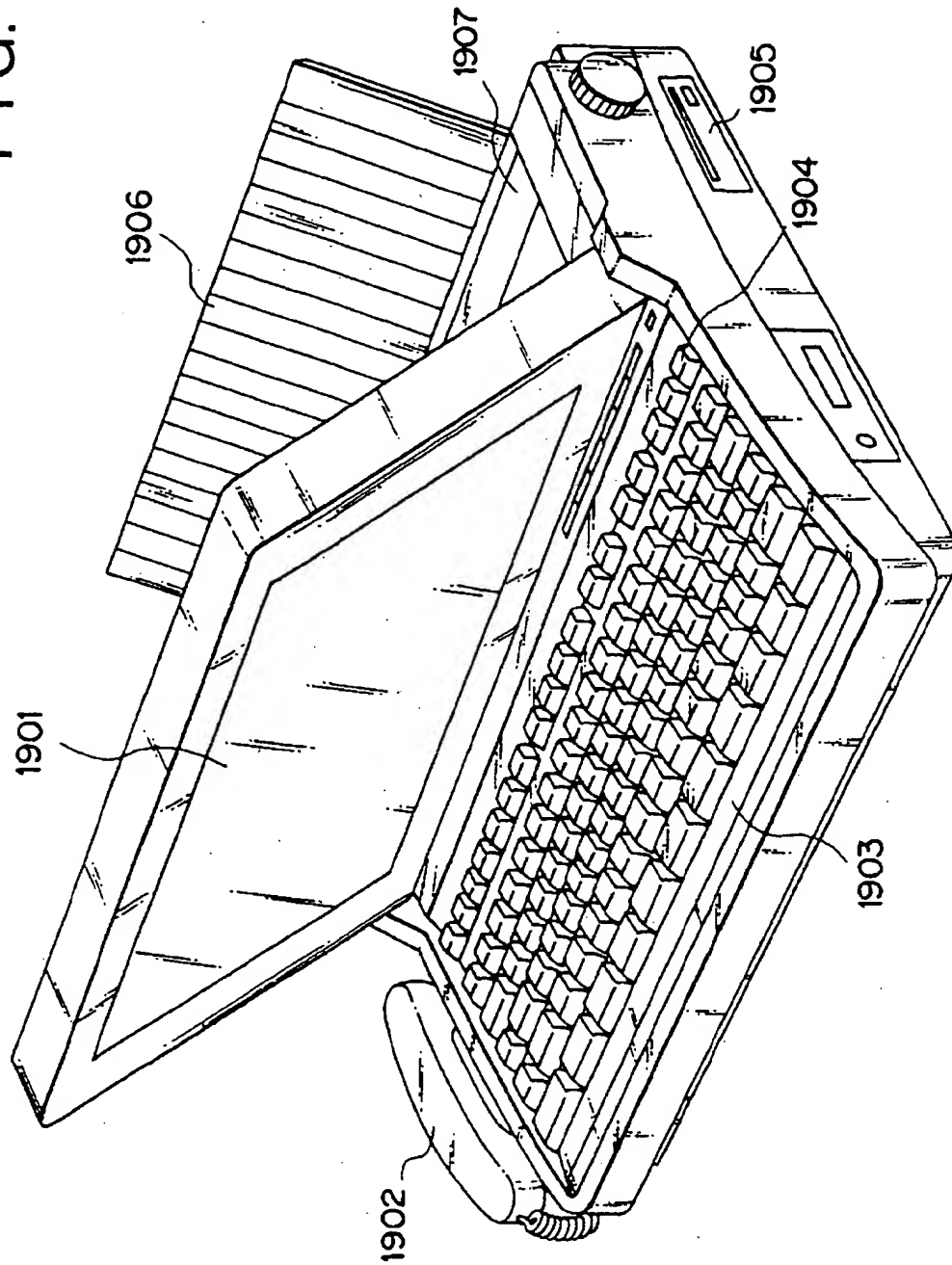


FIG. 14





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 95 30 3358

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. CL.6)
X	EP-A-0 431 249 (IBM)	1-4, 8, 9, 15, 16	G02B5/20 G02F1/1335
A	* the whole document *	10-14	
A	JP-A-61 245 106 (SEIKO EPSON)	1, 4, 5, 8-16	
	* the whole document *		
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 14, no. 442 (P-1109) 20 September 1990 & JP-A-02 173 703 (SEIKO EPSON) 5 July 1990 * abstract; figures *	1, 4, 5, 8-16	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 13, no. 125 (P-847) 28 March 1989 & JP-A-63 294 503 (FUJITSU) 1 December 1988 * abstract; figure *	1, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. CL.6)
			G02B G02F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 2 August 1995	Examiner Ward, S
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, not published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

EPO FORM 150 (1.1.1) (P.01.01)

FIG. 1A

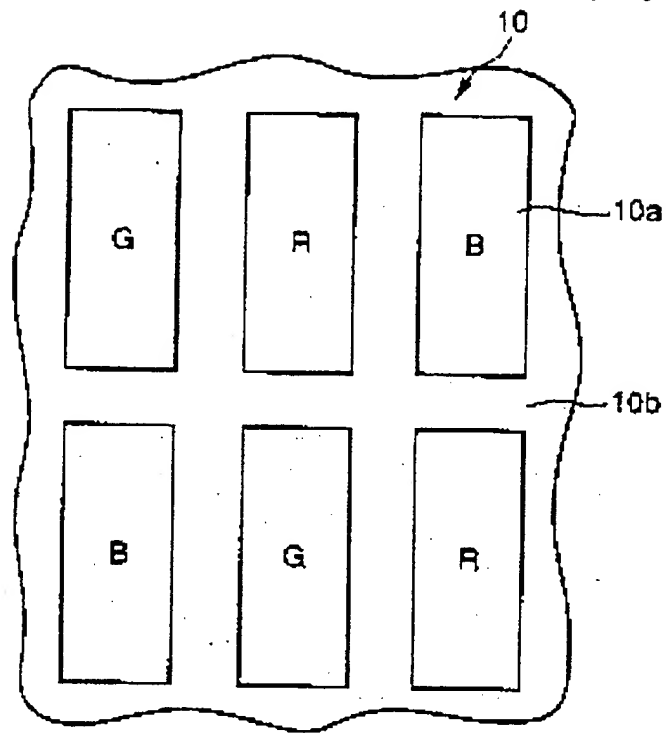


FIG. 1B

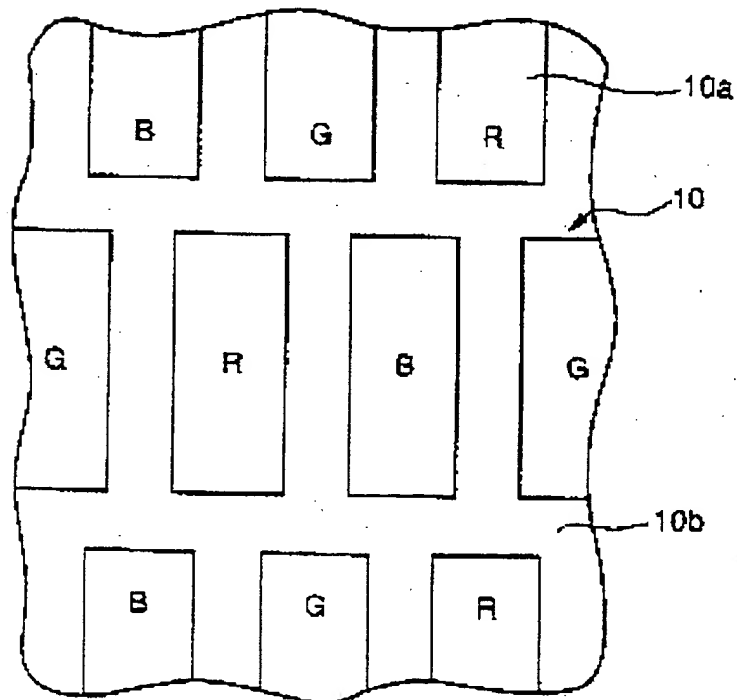


FIG. 2

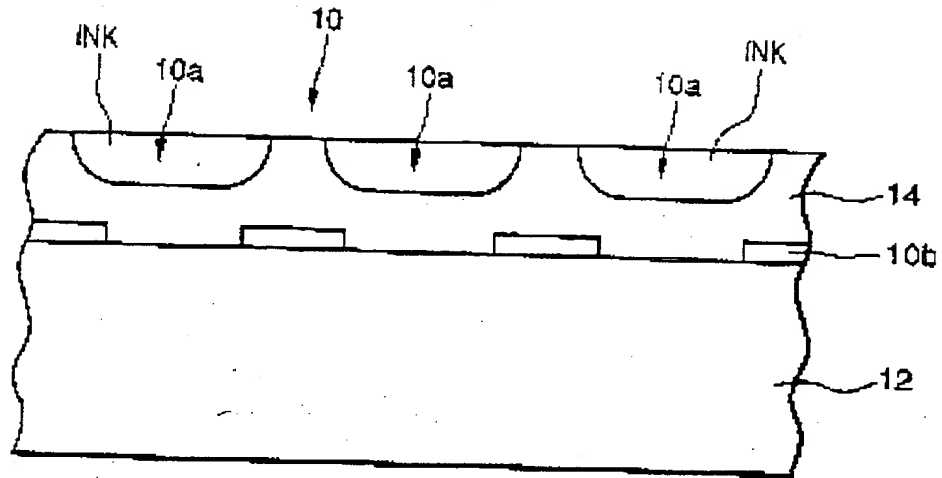


FIG. 3

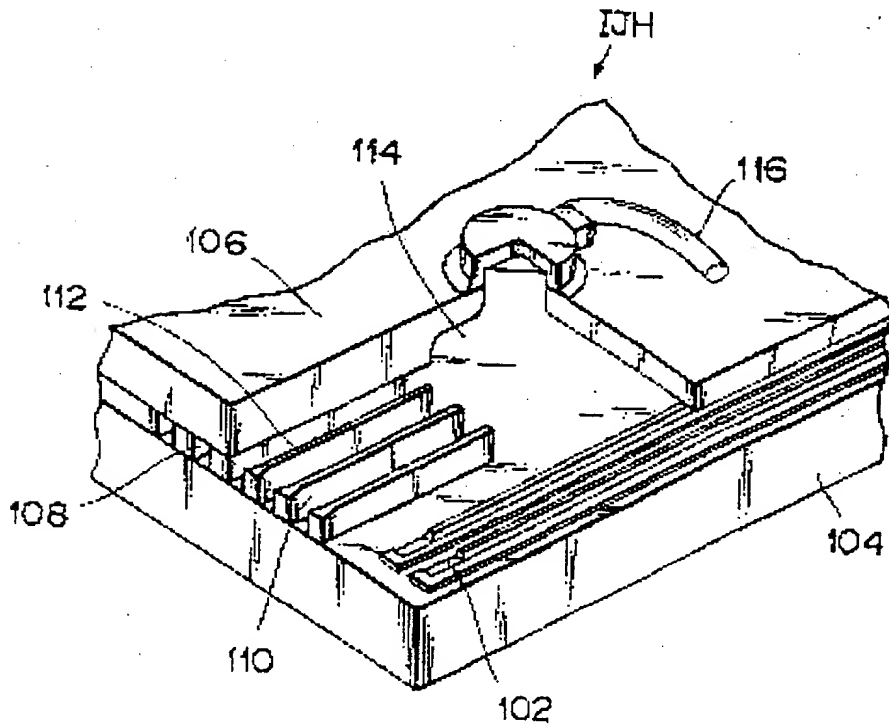


FIG. 4

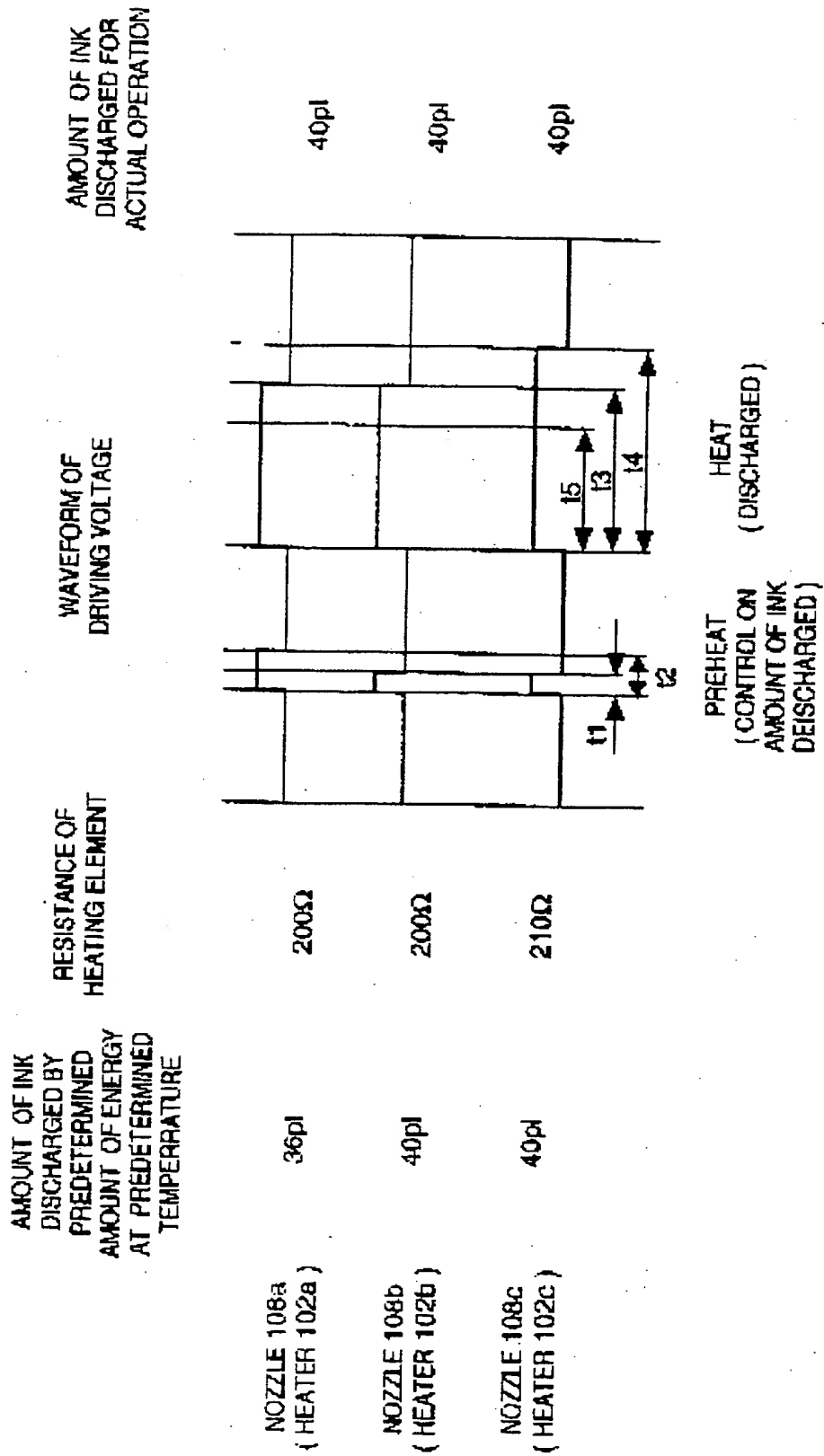


FIG. 5

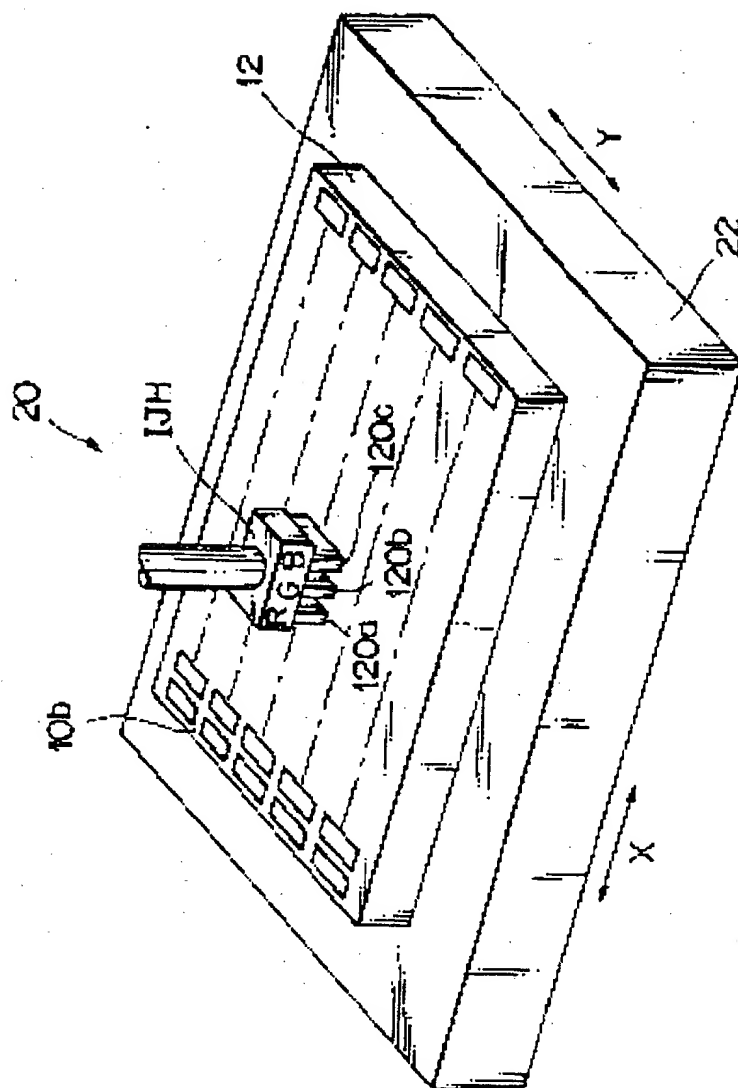


FIG. 6

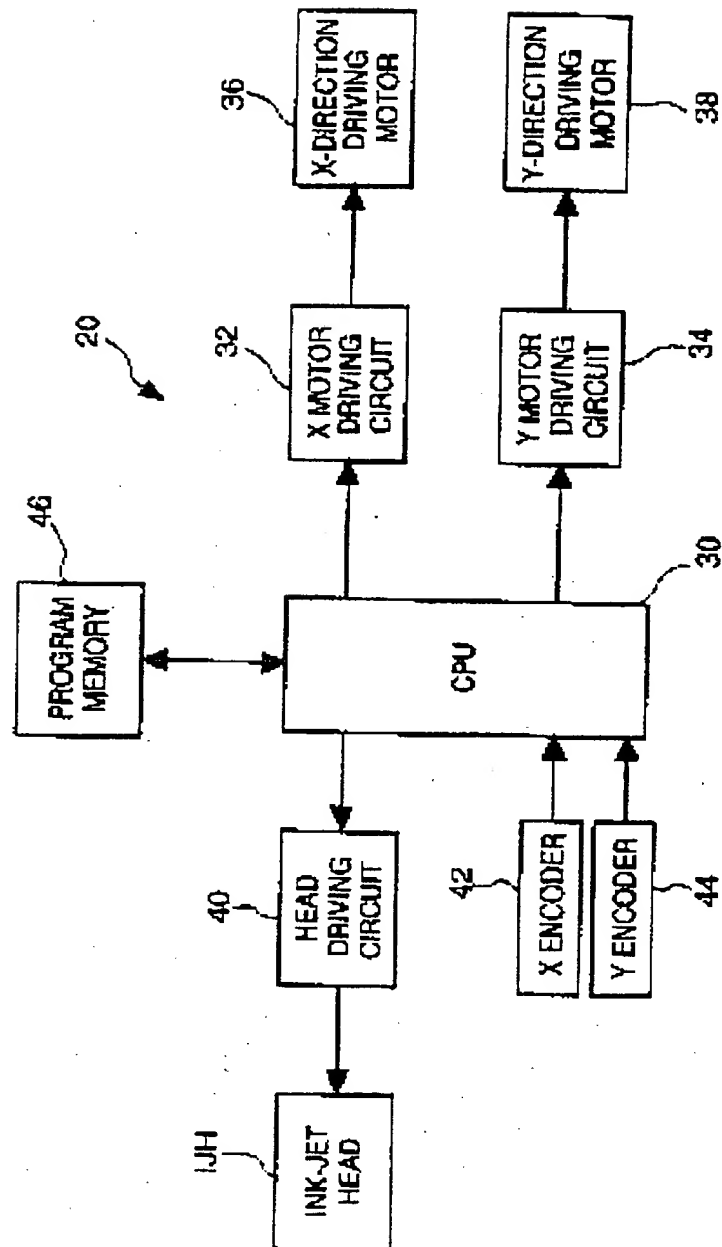


FIG. 7

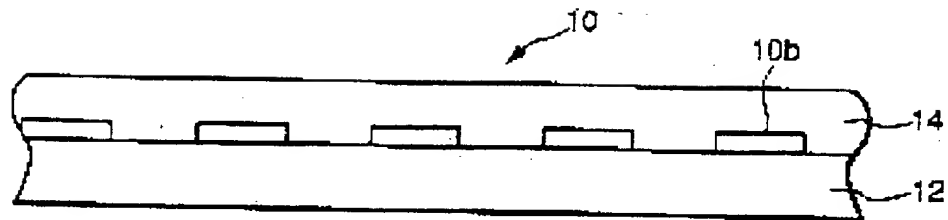


FIG. 8

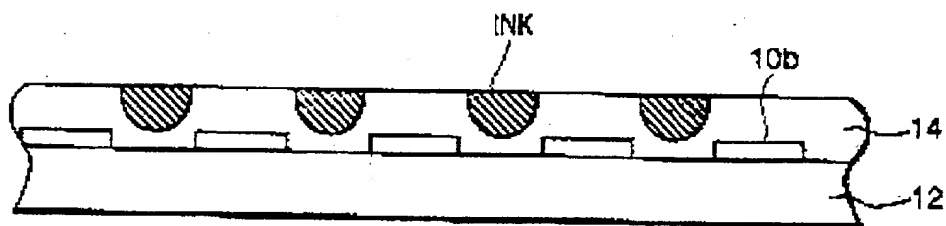


FIG. 9

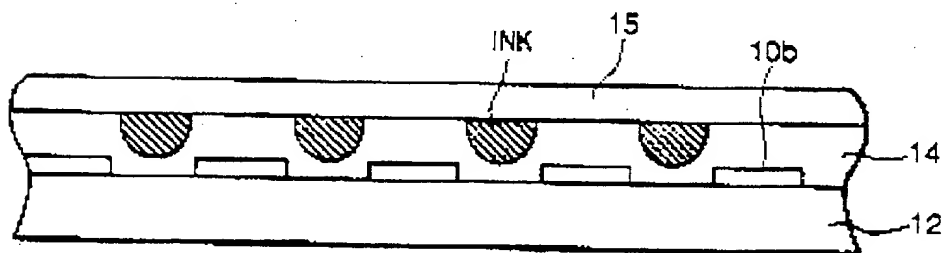


FIG. 10

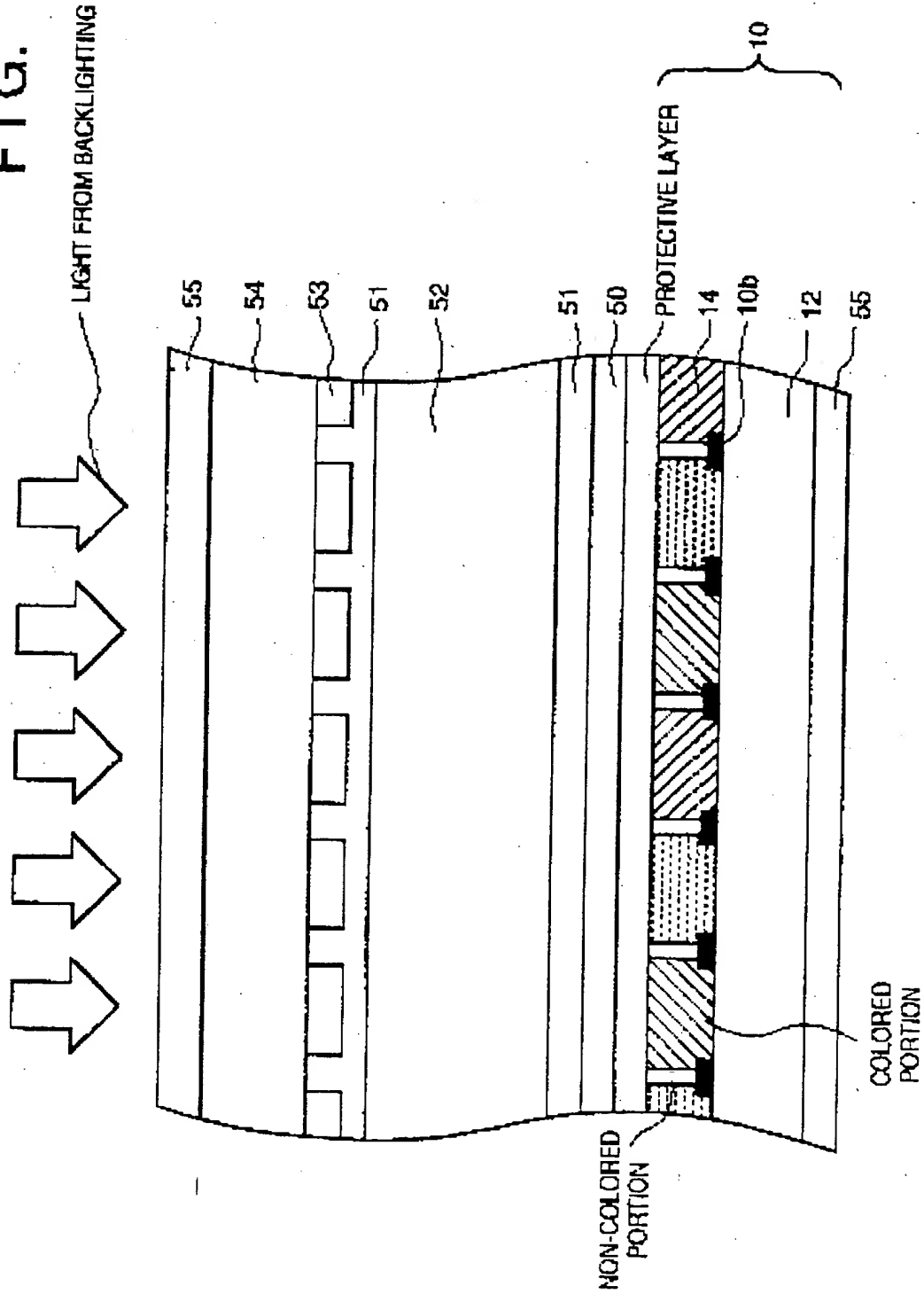


FIG. 11

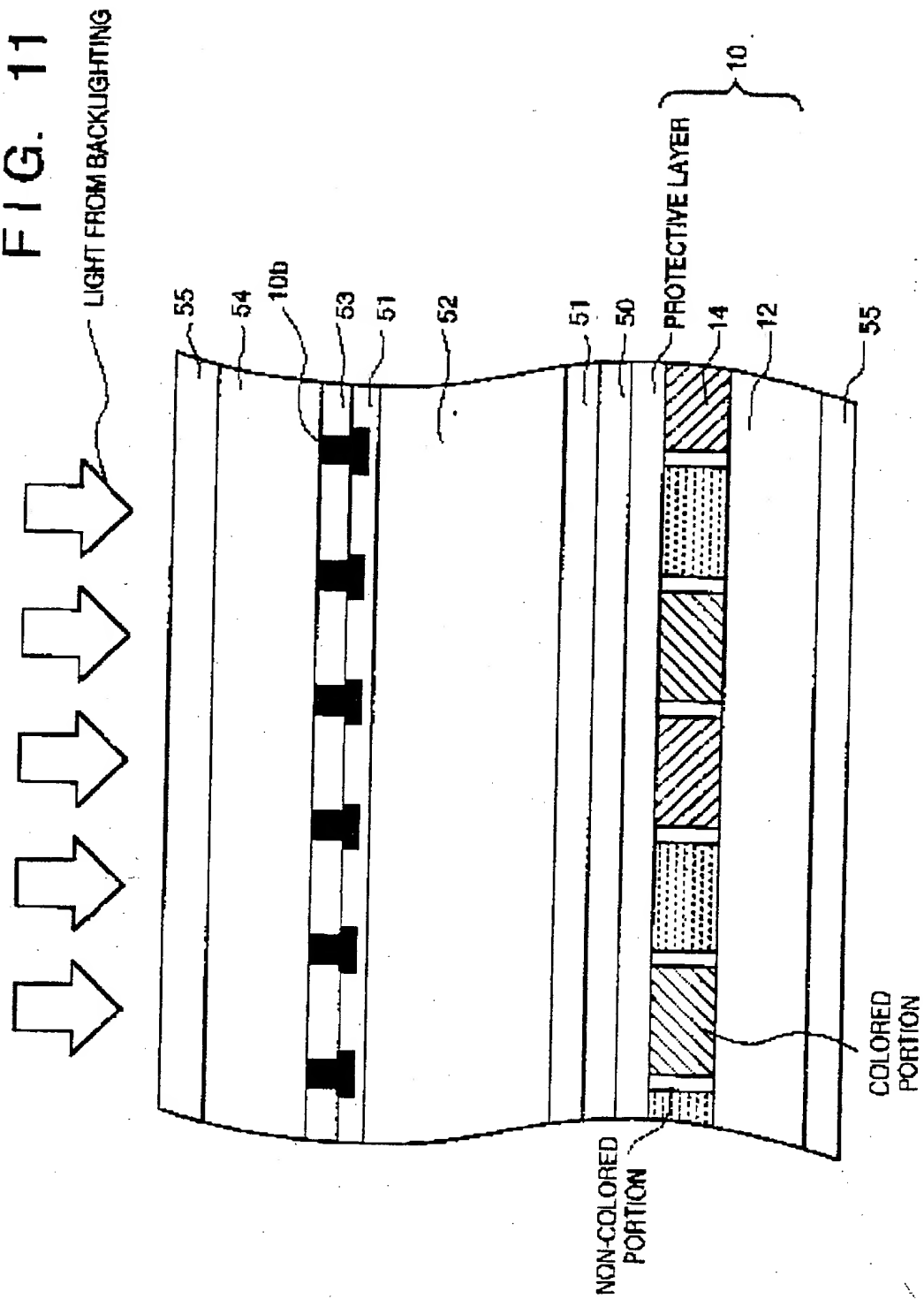


FIG. 12

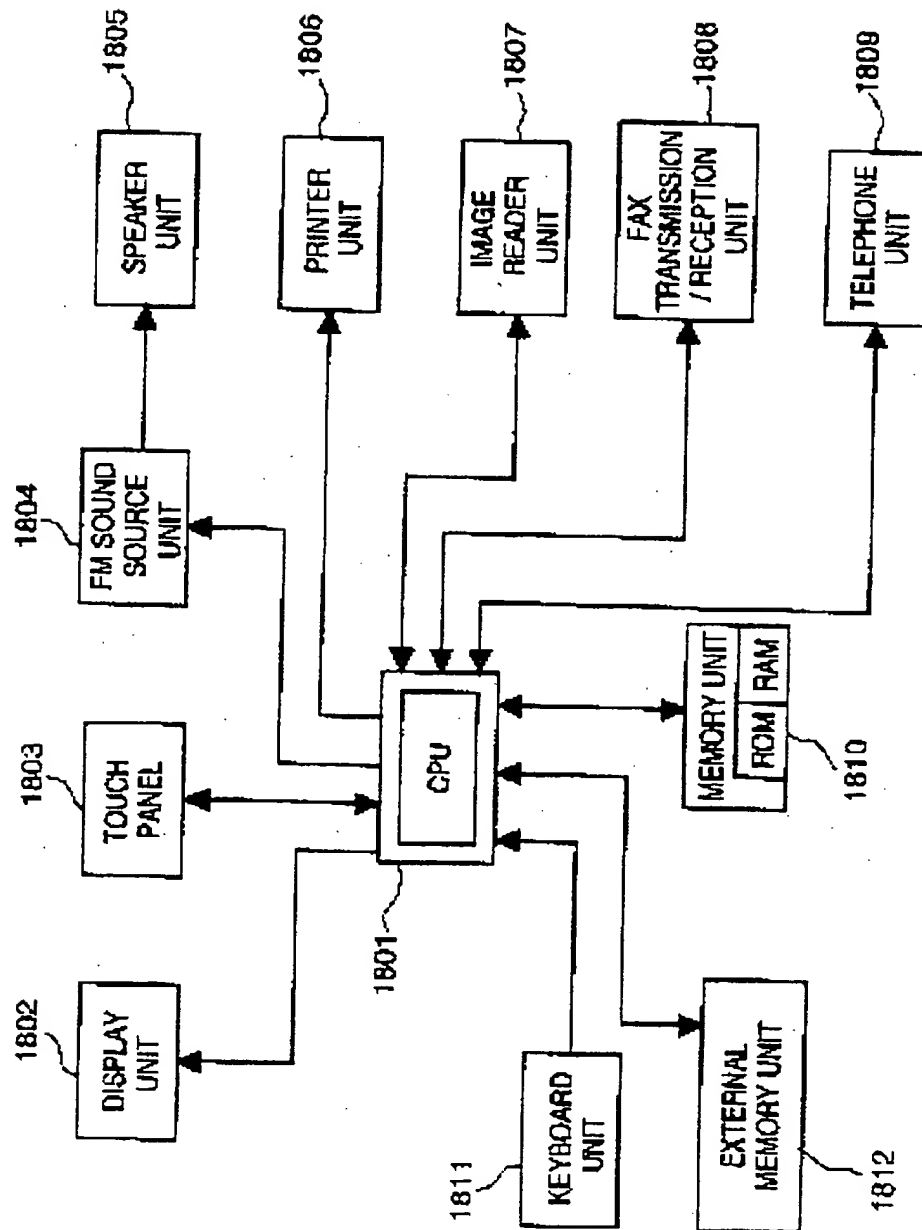


FIG. 13

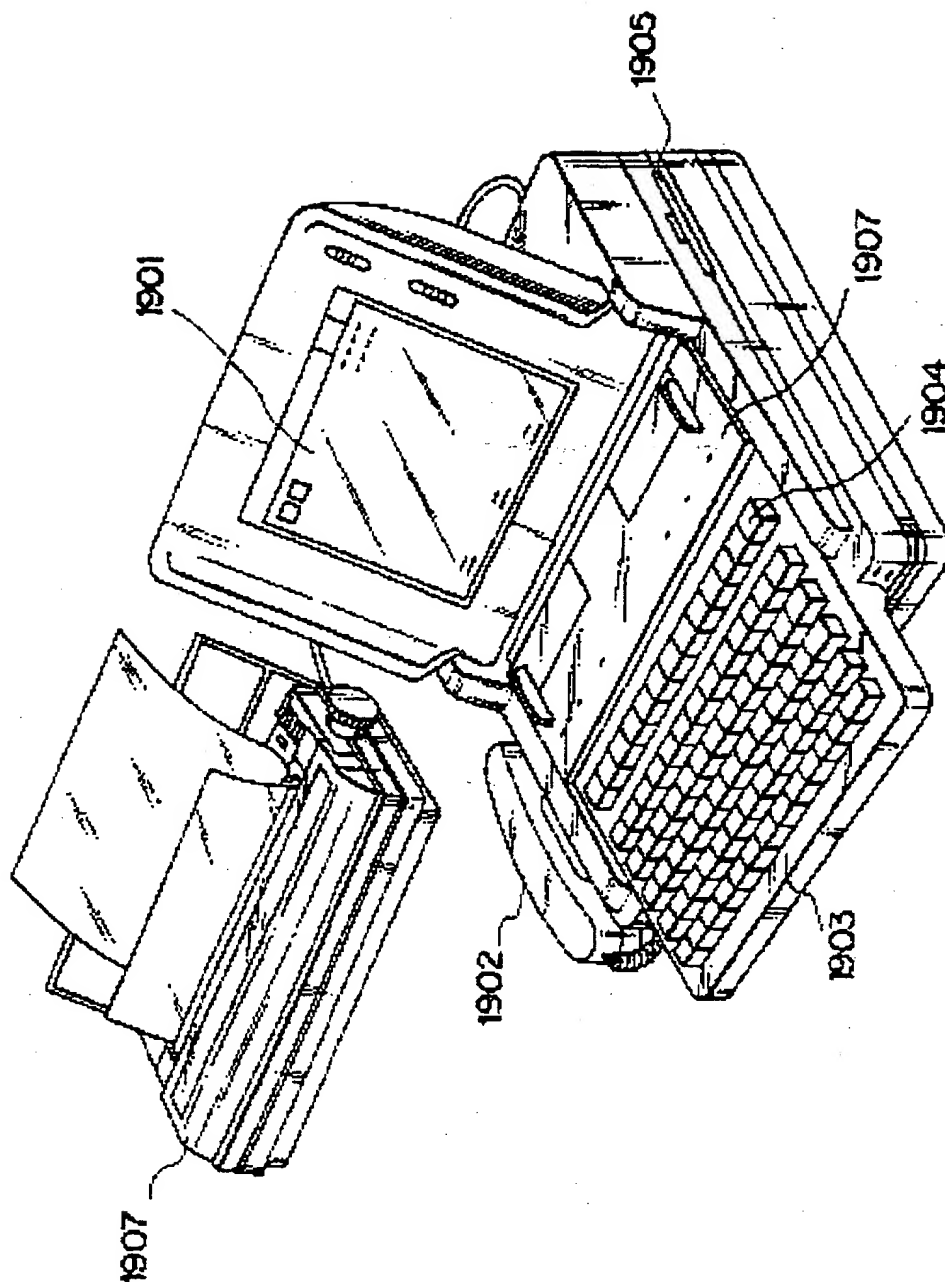
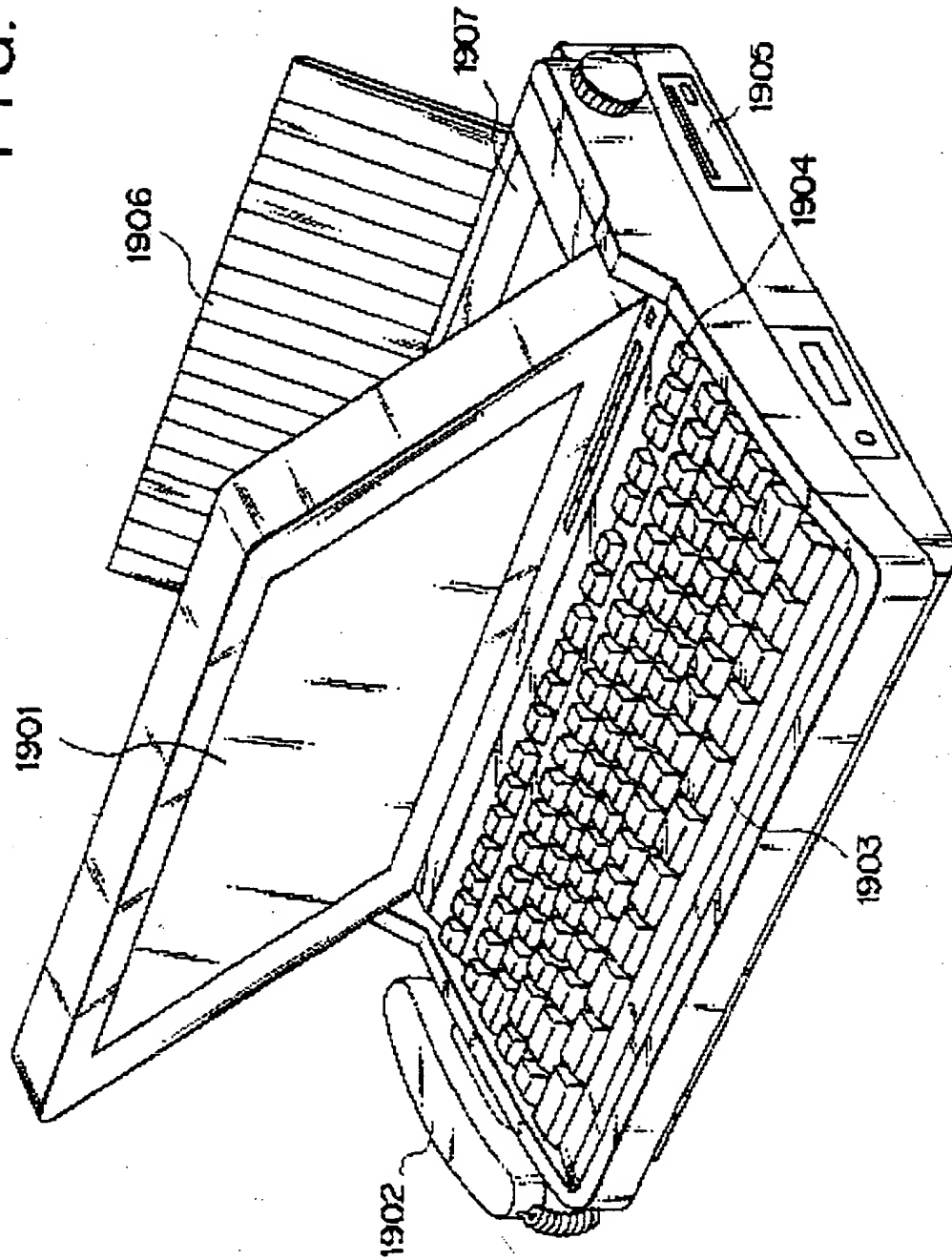


FIG. 14



THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)